UNIVERSITY OF LONDON THESIS

Degree PhD Year 2005 Name of Author MAY S-J.

~~ON THE GENDER OF~~
~~INFINITE DETAIL AND THE ARCHIVAL AD INFINITUM~~
~~IN THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHICS –~~
~~FROM ORIGINS TO STRUCTURALISM.~~

THE GENDER POLITICS OF INFINITE DETAIL
AND THE ARCHIVAL AD INFINITUM IN
TRANSGENDERIST PHOTOGRAPHICS — FROM ORIGINS
TO STRUCTURALISM.

Submitted for the Requirement of Ph.D.
Sebastian John Mays,
Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, 2004.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ABSTRACT.

The thesis constructs a filiation relating transcendentalist photographic practices. The historical span stretches from the early nineteenth century inventions of photographics (Daguerre, Arago, Talbot, Hill, Holmes), through American modernism (Stieglitz, Strand, Weston, Adams), and ends with structuralist film and photographics (Frampton). This lineage is argued to mark significant shifts in the gender politics of the transcendentalist impression of the photographic archive.

I argue that the filiation is underpinned by major photographic forms of infinity: detail and proliferation. Within the gender-political context of their archival dimension, these forms are compared to major philosophical forms of infinites (in Plato, Longinus, Virgil, Burke, Kant, Hegel). The thesis marks the dismantling of this tradition through the feminine coding of the archival ad infinitum – extending canonical feminist thought (Irigaray, Kristeva) into photographic history via a deconstructive methodology (Derrida, Felman, Lyotard, de Man).

The key theoretical contention of the thesis is that the ur-scene recorded by photographic and philosophical discourses is an encounter with and retraction from infinities which are figured in gendered terms. This traumatic encounter is argued to be the archival motor which produces material archives. The thesis tests the relationship between this motor and the gendered impression of the social circulation, storage and dissemination of images produced by a given photographic practice.

The practical aspect of research is engages with the social circulation and storage of art through the photographic. These works hazard critical purchase in the residual archival ambience of Minimal and Conceptual art. Practical and theoretical work are linked by two main issues: an attention to affects associated to the dissolution of concepts, by which unity becomes fragmented, particularised; and thus, an attention to 'the detail' as a form of (feminine) contingency. Key here is the quasi-concept of the 'impression' (Derrida) – the precise impact of a vague image of conceptual unity.

DEDICATIONS.

For my parents, for everything.

This research was made possible with the grateful acceptance of the Arts and Humanities Research Board Full Award for Doctoral Research and the University College London Graduate School Minor Award for Postgraduate Studies.

I would like to thank my supervisors during the initial stages of research – Norman Bryson, Andrew Renton and John Hilliard – for their advice and guidance; and those who oversaw the writing up period – Penny Florence, Steve Edwards, and Denis Masi – for their knowledge, precision, and critical reflection. I cannot understate my indebtedness to their patient care.

I would also like to thank staff at Slade for generous time and help at various stages: Phyllida Barlow, Cliff Haines, Suzanne Mooney, Sharon Morris, Caroline Nichols, Jacqueline Readwin, Joy Sleeman, Alan Turner, and Finlay at the bindery.

Instrumental in facilitating research were: Leslie Calmes at the Centre for Creative Photography, Tucson; Mike Gray at the Talbot Archive, Lacock; Antony Montoya at the Strand Archive; Naomi Rosenblum; and Peter Gidal.

Thanks also to friends, colleagues, and influences: Kit Abramson, the Absolute, Dert Aer, Fiona Candlin, Andrew Coleman, David Cunningham, Andy Fisher, Dave Henson, Mathew Holder, Simon Hollis, Sam D. Mason, Gordon Shrigley, Alex Warwick, Veno, and Adam Vert.

Finally, thanks also to Judy Browne, for convincing me to begin.

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INTRODUCTION – Opening Statements I.

Prefatory Note – On the Origin of Research.

Initial conduct for this research concerned the gender politics of the archival rephotography of Hannah Höch (1889-1978). The experience of reading repeatedly encroached upon an encounter with an infinitely complex field of possible relations between the details of multiple elements; indicating potentially endless exegesis, and a concomitant material accumulation of images and words – an endless archive (fig.1).

Fig.1: Hannah Höch, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* (1919-20), photocollage, 114 x 90 cm.

A point at which knowledge of the historical, political and didactic context of the image no longer appeared to provide determinate criteria, the experience of indeterminacy is comparable to the first moment of the sublime, but without resolution. This epistemological trauma of the symbolic is characterised by a partial castration of judgement, but as the point at which prejudicial methodology is no longer simply tenable, the object of analysis begins to exist as something distinct.

This effect surfaces in Maud Lavin's analysis of the centre of *Cut With the Kitchen Knife* (1919-20), which recognises and retracts from indeterminacy before turning to firmer ground: "whatever connotations | ... | might be inferred are made merely ironic by the improbability of the implied narrative".[1] Rather than simply delimiting or finitising, the onus seems to be to make this fundamental encounter with indeterminacy the object of research; to maintain this between-state, which, given the historically paternal character of the symbolic, bears on the destabilisation of gender. If, as Christine Battersby asserts, the compositional centre of *Cut With the Kitchen Knife* "focuses on the *female* contribution to art and anti-art", the indeterminacy of its elements disturbs the historically masculine concept of a unified and singular centre, whose apogee is the absolute infinite – deity.[2] The tactic then, was to practise this tremulousness of the symbolic within paternal photographic history.[3]

§ 1 – Prefatory Remarks.

Note 1 – Introduction: the Object.

Photography has historically been thought to provide an excessively accurate visual record or to provide endless plenitude of content – to contain 'infinite detail'. In this, the photograph has been thought contiguous with the infinite complexity of nature. In the discourses of Western aesthetics that historically determined much of the

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[1] See Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, pp. 30-31.

[2] See Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Toward a Feminist Aesthetics*, London: The Women's Press, 1989, p. 143.

[3] That is, to maintain the "insecurity" of "elusive manhood", rather than the irrational oppression of the feminine manifested in tribal ritual and extending into scientific thought from seventeenth-century natural philosophy to twentieth-century atomic physics – discourses which have impacted upon the understanding of the photographic. See Brian Elsea, *Fathering the Unthinkable: Masculinity, Scientists and the Nuclear Arms Race*, London: Pluto Press, 1983, pp. 11-12.

understanding of photographics, nature has pervasively been coded as a feminine object of two sorts: a positive form which is amenable to masculine appropriation, and a negative form which resists such determination. Photographics have also been thought, as a technology of copying, to potentiate infinite replication. On this side, rather than nature, the photograph is often attached to industrial production, and to the spectacle. Again, industrial production and capital circulation historically appear as gendered forms of positive and negative types: controlled proliferation attached to masculine determination, unrestrained proliferation to feminine contingency.

Both forms of endlessness may thus be positively or negatively valorised. Within positivistic discourses, infinite detail is only 'good' to the extent that it offers determinate representation, indicating a specific quantum of records to account for a given subject – a finite archive. Should the detail of the photograph defer the finality of knowledge, the archive becomes negative – endless accumulation without telos. Thus the two forms are interlinked; indeed, their relation will be shown to be chiasmic.

Both forms are impressions of endlessness, since both are limited by horizons of finitude – material, economic, and cultural. The impression of infinite extension is the product of a retraction from determining extent. For example: increasing magnification of a negative or print will eventually lose any sense of a coherent image by locating the pragmatic limit of grain, before descending into the sub-atomic delirium of quantum mechanics. Likewise, analysis of the material longevity of negatives will indicate that extra steps of reproduction and preservation would have to be taken for the idea of infinite prints to be potentiated.

At the outset, then, let the milieu be hazarded: the photographic is excessively characterised, as discourse and technical medium, by encounters with forms of infinity – specifically here: infinite detail and proliferation. The object of this thesis is the story of their inter-relation, considered in terms of its gendered dimension, as it transpires through a particular lineage of aesthetic theory and practice. The tradition in question would constitute the dispersed archive of this object. It is clear that no attempt has been made to account for this object in any protracted sense to date.

Note 2 – The History of Photography and Watery Relativism.

Although overwhelmingly divested of gendering, the ad infinitum is significant for photographic histories as a methodological problem, and as a condition of its objects. For example: in Marien's analysis of the museumisation and commercialisation of photography, Rosenblum's *A World History of Photography* (1984) is without a determining narrative, and hence,

> many chains of names strewn in the text [...] elaborate Newhall's story, but do not reform its plot line [....] The book's analyses are fractured with too many facts [....] she is open to criticism for what she has not included.[4]

Rosenblum is, here, the producer of finitude in relation to an ad infinitum whose phantom appears through a failure of synthesis. The "watery relativism" of this failure is historically significant, given that the museumisation and dissemination of photographics has accumulated into the indeterminacy of a "crisis of outlook". Part of the problem for contextualising (against formalising) photohistorians is the excess of

[4] Mary Warner Marien, 'What Shall We Tell the Children ? Photography and its Text (Books)', 1984, in Liz Heron and Val Williams (eds.), *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the late 1850s to the Present*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1996, pp. 217-8.

empirical particularity – "the frustration of so many social facts and the insufficiency of archival work, however punctilious, to form itself into a revisal". Marien closes with an affirmation that synthetic revisions "emerge [...] when a belief in societal possibilities runs high", yet this is an issue of the future: "[t]here will be a new history of photography, but right now it seems that we can only predict fragments of the past".[5]

Marien's gargantuan *Photography: A Cultural History* (2002) appears wholly within this problematic, offering a schematic outline of photographic history whose very inclusivity is open to attacks concerning the failure of inscription.[6] Such issues are an aspect of Michael Frizot's enormous *The New History of Photography* (1998). Indeterminacy is recognised at a level of the visual: rather than their "classification into categories", the presentation of images is designed to maintain their "ambiguity".[7] Frizot withdraws from overdetermination – retracting from an indeterminate field to preserve and protect the contingent character of the image.[8]

This problematic is also a more or less self-conscious part of the object of analysis, though this connection is not registered by Marien: Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, Henry James, and Sigfried Kracauer are given as examples of a resistance to the proliferation of photographs in the world, which displaces determinacy in the form of

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[5] Ibid., pp. 219-22.
[6] Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, London: Lawrence King Publishing, 2002, pp. x-xv, p. 496.
[7] Michael Frizot, 'Foreword', in Michael Frizot (ed.), *The New History of Photography*, Köln: Könemann, 1998.
[8] The ad infinitum of reinscription appears where Batchen defends Frizot's organisation of the book, but follows with the absence of vernacular practices. See Geoffrey Batchen, '"fearful ghost of former bloom": What Photography Is', in David Green (ed.), *Where is the Photograph*, Brighton / Maidstone: Photoforum / Photoworks, 2003, pp. 27-8.

value, reality, and memory.[9] What I want to propose is to take this problematic relationship between the finite and determinate and the infinite and indeterminate as the object of research – not in order to attain totality, but to articulate the indeterminate in its very groundlessness. Its analyses will hazard that, in the null time of the now, archival indeterminacy just is the possibility of the future reorganisation of photographic history.

Given that the photographic in the historical span of this thesis is greatly determined by the paternal discourse of Western philosophy, exclusion and reinscription are necessarily gendered issues. Roberta McGrath offers three responses to this situation: to reinscribe the excluded figures of women photographers; to construct a specifically feminine discourse in opposition to the mainstream filiation; and to analyse the function of the figures of the feminine within that filiation in order to dismantle the paternal discourse.[10] Both former strategies are within the oppositional logic of the paternal, and within the endless demand for reinscription: the latter is here the tactic of operation. Other than points that are designed to indicate the internal femininity of the masculine, as constructed within supposedly masculine discourse, this research is resolutely non-comparative – the position of women photographers contemporaneous with this history constitutes another work.[11]

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[9] Marien, *Photography*, pp. xiv-xv. Fear of the ad infinitum is thus a class issue – Marien notes an antipathy to the mass market of photography in Eastlake's resistance to the "proliferation" of images, and James' antipathy to the mass media and general public's preference for representation over reality.

[10] Roberta McGrath, 'Re-reading Edward Weston – Feminism, Photography and Psychoanalysis' (1987), in Heron and Williams, *Illuminations*, p. 269.

[11] For an account of the elision of women photographers by the canonical histories of photography, and a reinscription of key figures in the feminine canon, see Naomi Rosenblum, *A History of Women Photographers*, New York: Abbeville Press, 1994.

§ 2 – Typology of the Infinites.

Note 1 – The Photography of Philosophy.

The thought of the infinites also characterises another field – as Gasché states:

> semantic analysis with its insistence on the study of meaning, of reference, and truth, is *the* method of metaphysics as *prote philosophia*. It is *the* method for retracing the ultimate cause, the one unity of meaning which from within transcends all finite things. In the perspective of philosophical thought, the concept of true infinity is not merely a semantic concept among others. It is the semantic concept *par excellence*, if not even the concept of the semantic itself.[12]

This is not to propose a meta-discourse for the photographic, despite Gasché's prioritisation. If nothing is more philosophical than infinity, and nothing more to do with infinity than photography, then there is nothing more philosophical than photography. This is to dehierarchise – an effect which may be indicated via reference to Derrida's 'The Deaths of Roland Barthes' (1981) via Batchen's prècis. Here, photography is characterised by the "signing of signs" of the real (Batchen), a production which is never entirely present or absent. As such, this indicates that the spectrality of the photographic is what might sustain it as a philosophical analogon: "this concept of the photograph photographs all conceptual oppositions, it traces a relationship of haunting which perhaps is constitutive of all logics" (Derrida).[13] The relation between photography and philosophy is spectral – constituted by a chiasmic relation of interconnection and difference. Historically speaking, photographic forms of infinity are enmeshed with – produced by and transforming – existing philosophical concepts of the infinites.

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[12] Rodolphe Gasché, 'Nontotalization without Spuriousness: Hegel and Derrida on the Infinite', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, Vol. 17, No. 3, Oct 1986, p. 297.
[13] Geoffrey Batchen, 'Ectoplasm: Photography in the Digital Age' (1999), in Carol Squiers (ed.), *Over Exposed: Essays on Contemporary Photography*, New York: The New Press, 1999, pp. 21-2.

Since Derrida argues that the philosophical thought of the infinites beginning in Plato is completed in Hegel, the abstract relation between the types will be articulated through the latter: the ad infinitum of negative infinity and the totalised form of positive infinity. The former is quantitative and negative, the latter qualitative and positive – a distinction determined by totality.[14] These negative and positive types have diverse names that are specific to particular discourses – for example: the unlimited and the eternal (Plato), spurious infinity and the Absolute (Hegel). This indicates a problematic. On the one hand, there are common structures: indefinite endlessness, totalised multiplicity – and common relationships between the two: opposition (Plato) or immanence (Hegel). This suggests that the infinites are transhistorical meta-objects that can generally account for particular examples in discourses. On the other hand, it is clear that infinities never appear as purely neutral, abstract forms. Instead, the thought of the infinites is complexly enmeshed within the thought of other objects – specifically gender. Rather than ascribing an origin to either of these poles, the thesis will maintain an awareness of the strange and complex play of the abstract and instantiated forms of the infinites.

Note 2 – Negative Infinity: the Femininity of the Ad Infinitum.

The classical model of the limits of totalisation results from the finitude of the empirical subject surveying the infinite richness of a given field of elements. To analyse such a field would take an endless amount of time, would have no determinate telos. This defines negative or "spurious" infinity – the ad infinitum. It represents "abstract

[14] Gasché, 'Nontotalization', p. 291.

progress" – the infinite repetition of the same, a failure to progress beyond a particular mode of addition. Because it is burdened by the empirical, the particular and the sensuous – which are coded feminine by Hegel – it is always finitised, negated by its other; trapped in a tedious and "perpetual repetition" of oscillation between self and other, being and nothingness.[15]

Jeff Wall interprets Hegel's ad infinitum as Romanticism's fear of mechanised modernity, noting its widespread appearance.

> 'Bad infinity', and its later extrapolations, repetition-compulsion (Freud), the 'eternal return of the same' (Nietzsche), the circuits of Money-Commodity-Money (Marx) are the permanent, symptomatic appearance-forms of capitalist 'progress'.[16]

Without spirit, labour accumulates without positive synthesis, ad infinitum. Comparably, Ross describes May '68 as an uprising against the "indefinite present" of capitalism and its denial of "succeeding historical changes". Student refusal of negotiatory dialogue with the state and the use of graffiti as a more immediate form of communication registers an impatience with meta-discourse articulated by Sartre: "words that comment upon other words and so on and so forth into infinity".[17] The ad infinitum here links a number of objects – discursive, economic, and historical.

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[15] Ibid., p. 294. This is clear in *The Philosophy of Right* and the Jena Lectures, where the processing of nature through machines leads to "spiritless" activity. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1820), A.W. Wood (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 2002, § 198, n. 1, p. 444. On bad infinity's nullification of the concept, and hence philosophical speculation, and on the immanence of positive infinity within the negative, vide Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1986, pp. 37-39.

[16] Jeff Wall, 'Into the Forest: Two Sketches for Studies of Rodney Graham's Work', *Rodney Graham: Works from 1976 - 1994*, Catalogue, 1994, pp. 12-13.

[17] Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 183, p. 187.

Sartre's antipathy to the accumulation of words indicates the possibility of an antipathy to their material accumulation – an archival antipathy. Certainly, from Plato onwards the ad infinitum is consistently attached to the femininity of writing and its archives. If Derrida has established that speech is attached to determinacy and telos, writing to indeterminacy and endlessness, the latter's denigration causes a negative valorisation of written archives. The history of philosophy from Plato to Hegel, through Aristotle, Longinus, Virgil, Burke, and Kant sustains this association of terms within a trajectory of an increasing complexity and an increasing sense of mastery. Nevertheless, the phobia of the archive is never far: it is consistently figured as a feminine presence which is not only endless in linear extension, but which defers, displaces and thus recesses determinate telos – linearity converts into a closed, secretive circularity which is attached to the womb. As I will argue, and in an extension of this philosophical thought, the thematic of the recess is a determinant feature of the photographic.

Note 3 – Positive Infinity: the Paternity of Totality.

For Hegel, transcendence of infinite repetition is effected at a higher level – of becoming rather than being and nothingness. In Gasché's schema, true infinity "is *the* fundamental concept of philosophy [...] in short, Reason".[18] Its dialectical transformations are also an image, as Wall states, of Modern historical change.[19] This fundamentality posits that philosophy's originary encounter is between the forms of the infinites. The spurious infinity of the incomplete (a straight line) is opposed to the finite in its negation by the infinite (a complete circle). This indicates the immanence of true

[18] Gasché, 'Nontotalization', p. 293.
[19] Wall, 'Into the Forest', p. 12.

infinity in the spurious, that is, in the line finding itself.[20] The difference between the spurious and the true hinges on the opposition between the universal and the particular that in Hegel is consistently figured as an opposition between the masculine and feminine.[21] While Gasché is oblivious to such gendering, the paternal universal effectively encapsulates the femininity of particularity.[22] In Hegel's terms, true infinity is a completed whole, a unity which is not in opposition to the finite or spurious, because by including all opposites within itself – and by including opposition – it has no outside. In philosophical terms true infinity is not open to determination because this would imply that it would be open to the determination of determination – an endless regress. Against philosophy, true infinity is opposed to the possibility that it might have an outside, that there is something different from it: it is logically opposed to opposition and to difference – impure, different from itself.

Note 4 – The Unfinite: the Multiples of Gender.

In this sense, positive infinity contains a remainder of that which is different from itself, unable to be logically produced in its purity, entering the unstable terrain of Derrida's critique of metaphysics. Difference cannot be pure: differing and deferring from itself, infinite différance would thus be finite. Différance partially undoes all monadic elements, thus all oppositions, inducing a chiasmic interchange between

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[20] Gasché, 'Nontotalization', p. 292-4.
[21] Simply put, Derrida cites "feminine law as the law of singularity". See Jacques Derrida, 'The Pit and the Pyramid' (1968), in Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (1972), trans. Alan Bass, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982, p. 77. Hegel's *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* is governed by an opposed series of terms in which the latter are prioritised: sensuous particularity, femininity, art-history and connoisseurship, the ad nauseum of endless particularity; against intellectual generality, masculinity, philosophy, and the totalisation of the absolute. See Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, Michael Inwood (ed.), trans. Bernard Bosanquet, London: Penguin, 1993.
[22] Gasché, 'Nontotalization', p .291.

memory and forgetting, the archival and the anarchival, the finite and the infinite.[23] Hence, 'Structure, Sign, and Play' (1966) is positioned against sublime magnitude.

> If totalization no longer has any meaning, it is [...] because instead of being an inexhaustible field, as in the classical hypothesis, instead of being too large, there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions.[24]

The encounter with the concept of the archive, itself within this field, will not be an encounter with forms of philosophical infinity, nor closure and totality, but the unfinite.[25]

But Derrida's 'This Strange Institution Called Literature' (1992) does not eradicate the "encyclopaediac temptation" of an "obsessive desire" to archive both what happens and what fails to happen, "a trace of all the voices that were traversing me – or were *almost doing so*":

> the unique event whose trace one would like to keep alive – is also the very desire that what does not happen should happen, and is thus a "story" in which the event already crosses within itself the archive of the "real" and the archive of "fiction".[26]

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[23] See Marian Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 43, p. 195.

[24] Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' (1966), in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1978, p. 289.

[25] Kristeva's sense of the incompletion of the thetic break verges close to this definition: "The disturbance of sequential completion or syntactic ellipsis lead to an infinitization of logical (syntactic) applications. Terms are linked together but, as a consequence of a non-recoverable deletion, they are linked *ad infinitum*. [....] Similarly, the denoted object does no disappear, it proliferates in mimetic, fictional, connoted objects." What is problematic is the disjunction between the terminological adoption of metaphysical concepts of the infinites and the structural description - if the telos of denotation is displaced into connotation, these partial objects cannot constitute plethora in the classical sense. See Julia Kristeva, 'Revolution in Poetic Language' (1975), in Toril Moi (ed.), *The Kristeva Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, pp. 108-9; Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva, 'Semiology and Grammatology: Interview with Julia Kristeva', *Positions* (1972), trans. Alan Bass, London: Athlone, 1987. Kristeva's pragmatic attachment to the concept of 'woman' must be differentiated from that of Hélène Cixous in 'The Laugh of the Medusa'. Against a phallocentric discourse which is fixed to and by the finality of the eternal, feminine writing carries rather than contains, is diverse, multiple. The optimism for deconstruction produces an empirical telos of social change which proceeds by way of a multiplicity which is biologically founded, and which thus reiterates the classical form of plethora, despite the attention to the openness of process.

[26] Jacques Derrida and Derek Attridge, '"This Strange Institution Called Literature": An Interview with Jacques Derrida' (1992), in Derek Attridge (ed.), *Acts of Literature*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 35-6.

Derrida's description of the force of the literary plays with the masculine rhetoric of progenation in the double bind of the archive here: the literary has a utopian possibility of evading or undermining the censor – in its fictivity – which is also what allows it to be dismissed as mere fiction. Thus its "impotence" is "potentially more potent".[27] The voices of the "internal polylogue" constitute a multiplicity opposed to the monologue of paternal philosophy, and gestures toward the destabilisation of gender opposition. In this way, 'Choreographies' (1982) contrasts the patrixal monologue with the matrixal –

> the multiplicity of sexually marked voices | ... | this interminable number of blended voices, this mobile of non-identified sexual marks whose choreography can carry, divide, multiply the body of each "individual", whether he be classified as "man" or as "woman" according to the criteria of usage.[28]

This sense of gender is congruent with the theory of the sign in 'Structure, Sign, and Play' – no longer is the individual a monad, but an unfinite ('interminable') and mobile concatenation. The philosophical relation of immanence between the feminine ad infinitum and the masculine absolute in their various forms is thus an attempted singularisation and containment of this differentiality. Nevertheless, this attempt is never complete: Le Doeuff characterises philosophy as "a discourse obeying | ... | a finite number of rules | ... | and as such it represents a closure, a delimitation which denies the | ... | indefinite character of modes of thought".[29] Rather, philosophy is internally incoherent – a "non-hegemonic rationalism" within which there is a place for feminine voices. In showing that the supposedly feminised and excluded aspects of the

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[27] Derrida and Attridge, '"This Strange Institution"', p. 56, p. 39, p. 43.
[28] Jacques Derrida and Christie McDonald, 'Choreographies' (1982), in Jacques Derrida, *Points ... Interviews, 1974-1994*, Elisabeth Weber (ed.), trans. Peggy Kamuf et al, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 108.
[29] Cited in Michelle Walker, *Philosophy and the Maternal Body: Reading Silence*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 17, p. 34.

philosophical concepts of the photographic archive are inherently internal to it, this thesis aims to degender and destigmatise nonclosure, endlessness, and the unfinite.

§ 3 – The Typology of the Archive.

Note 1 – The Paternity of the Archive.

The self-differentiality of elements is employed against the classical paternity of the archive at the opening of Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995) – in the divided origin of the term in the Greek *arkhé*. Arkhé refers to an ontological principle: the commencement of sequence, natural or historical; and to the nomological principle – the voice of the paternal law.[30] Given that the nomological precedes the ontological, the archive is determined by the archontic principle of the *arkheion* – the domicile of the magistrates *(archons)*, and involves the *consignation* of signs: their gathering together, organisation and recessing for the future.[31] The archive is, in this sense, a domestic scene within which paternal law operates, and from which it speaks.

The counterpart of the archons, the *theoria* of the polis, were chosen to act as legates on the basis of probity and stature – male citizens, not women, slaves or children.[32] The theoria mediate three key passages. Firstly, between an event and its entry into public discourse. Secondly, they maintain the life of the institutionally justified version of the event, providing stability against the feminising indeterminacy of public opinion. They construct the objects of public discourse by theoretically attesting

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[30] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995), trans. Eric Prenowitz, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 95. Since history includes the history of *physis* and its oppositions: *tekhne*, *nomos*, etc; the opposition breaks down, *qua* opposition - the opposition is reiterated within each pole.

[31] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 95.

[32] Wlad Godzich, 'The Paper Tiger on the Mat', Foreword to Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory*, Wlad Godzich (ed.), *Theory and History of Literature*, Volume 33, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. xiv.

to *aesthesis* (perception). Thirdly, then, they convert seeing and hearing into speaking – so as to be written, archived. The theoria are validated by the authority of the archons – aesthesis does not precede the archive in any simple sense, just as philosophy conditions what is perceived in the photograph: the origin of the 'real' is in the archival institution.

Note 2 – The Fate of the Concept.

In Derrida's 'Différance' (1968), and like the multiple origin of the archive, signs have the status of a "sheaf".[33] Bennington translates sheaf as "bundle" – signifying elements are not atomic, but are bundles of traces of other, absent elements that are not present elsewhere, because they too are comprised of trace-bundles; neither are they absent, *per se*.[34] As the metaphorics of the sheaf indicates, the thought of différance is a thought of the collection of documents, pages: an inherently archival thought.

In the professional practice of archiving, the bundle is the lowest and least organised form of documents. Since this concept of the archive is subsisted by an attachment to the elemental, there is a conflict between these two forms of thought. For archival practice, the term is precise: it tends to define the archive in the sense of specific repositories. For *Archive Fever*, the term "archive" is witness to a significant degree of slippage which is indicative of the fate of the concept.

> "Archive" is only a notion, an impression associated with a word and for which [...] we do not have a concept. We only have an impression, an insistent impression through the unstable feeling of a shifting figure, of a schema, or of an in-finite or indefinite process.[35]

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[33] Jacques Derrida, 'Différance' (1968), in Derrida, *Margins*, p. 3.
[34] Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 75.
[35] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 29.

This is because the concept of the archive is indetermined by the effects of something like the sheaf. The sheaf undoes all monadic elements, thus all oppositions, including those between memory and forgetting, the archival and the anarchival, between the finite and the infinite – the concept cannot clearly archive its own content. In this sense, it is the fate of the concept of archiving to be dispersed from the institution and into the field of the mnemonic at large – to refer to various mnemonic modes: documents in the singular to the psyché as substrate, and hence to social memory in general.[36] But, as Derrida maintains throughout 'Signature, Event, Context' (1977), the task is to precisely articulate such dissolution.[37] Here we encounter the double signification of the term "impression": an indefinite notion and a mark upon a surface, a blur and a dint.[38] What is at stake is the precise historical impact of archival impressions – the cultural and historical mark left by such notions within photographic practices. Hence, it must be made clear from the outset that this thesis is primarily concerned not with the actual place of storage of photographic works – what is paramount is rather the impression of archives projected by a particular photographic practice.

A reading of the photograph as impression is explicit in Derrida's 'Right of Inspection' (1985), which negotiates Marie-Françoise Plissart's photonovel with Barthes, Benjamin and Freud. Derrida's analysis associates genre, gender, and medium

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[36] For example: "the street is my archive, the built environment is my archive" – Mike Featherstone, 'Archiving Cultures', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 51, No. 1, January / March 2000, p. 171. Again, heterogeneous and contradictory definitions of archives abound in Anna Harding (ed.), *Potential: Ongoing Archive*, Amsterdam: Artimo Foundation, 2002. Such heterogeneity would be subsisted by the originary difference of the concept of the archive from itself, and would thus be the cultural sign of something like différance being the motor of archival accumulation.

[37] Jacques Derrida, 'Signature, Event, Context' (1977), in *Limited Inc.*, Gerald Graff, (ed.), trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and Samuel Weber, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

[38] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, pp. 26-31.

as forms of law; each of these concepts being subject to spectrality.[39] The photograph is described as a "superimposition" *(surimpression)* – an impression, and an "archive" which generates endless series.[40] But if "[t]he spectral is the essence of photography", photographs do not constitute positive entities or atoms whose accumulation would constitute an ad infinitum in the metaphysical sense.[41] Hence, the "abyssal" repetition of photographs within photographs is precisely articulated vis à vis infinity: requiring "endless analysis" *(sans fin)* whose time would be "practically infinite" *(pratiquement infini)*, their endlessness is 'virtual' *(virtuellement)*, the scope of their meaning being "almost limitless" *(quasiment illimitée)*.[42] These careful qualifications indicate retraction from the metaphysical infinites, and the paradox of the unfinite.[43]

The chiasmus between particularity and generality characterises the gendering of Plissart's photographs, in an alternation of masculine and feminine traits which is tied to an alternation between black and white.[44] The feminine, as *dame*, is connected to domination, the queen substituting the king on the chequerboard of the photonovel.[45] This is not an alternation strictly within metaphysical binarity: by 'playing' at gender, it becomes part of the alogicality of the spectral.

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[39] Jacques Derrida, 'Right of Inspection' (1985), in Jacques Derrida and Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Right of Inspection*, New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998, p. vi, p. x. Page numbers refer to the French original which appears as image within the unpaginated translated text.
[40] Derrida, 'Right of Inspection', p. vii, p. vi, p. iv.
[41] Ibid., p. vi, p. vi. In terms of the deconstruction of the atomic, see Derrida, *Positions*, p. 40.
[42] Derrida, 'Right of Inspection', p. v, p. xi. For a discussion of the status of the term 'quasi' as a sign of the alogical, see Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, pp. 267-284.
[43] This is close to the alogic of the infinites in Derrida, 'Structure, Sign, And Play', p. 289.
[44] Derrida, 'Right of Inspection', pp. viii-ix, p. x, p. xi.
[45] Ibid., p. ix, p. xxi.

Note 3 – Futurity and Femininity.

The quasi-concept of the sheaf produces a specific attitude toward accumulation: the futurity of the archive is not a possible or impossible quest toward the closure of total knowledge; nor is it positively valorised as an ongoing development in the sense of 'work in progress'.[46] These classical bearings toward the future of the archive can be given through a historical and contemporary example.

Some differences should be marked within the nineteenth century photographic archives of Bertillon and Galton. Bertillon's project effectively identifies individuals in their specificity – in their idiosyncratic difference from others. To the extent that individuals are endlessly different, Bertillon potentiates an infinite archive. Galton attempted to classify subjects within a generalising typology. The archive here takes place as the mediation of the individual and the general through taxonomic principles that could account for any forthcoming particularity. Somewhere between these forms, the contemporary Canadian policy toward cultural memory is defined as a project for "total archives".[47] These are ongoing accumulations which both consign information from the past and await the production of new cultural artefacts – the policy positively identifies with the ad infinitum, but is still attached to a concept of an endlessly deferred totality in accounting for cultural identity.

In *Archive Fever*, the internal imprecision of the sign is what requires further forays of delimitation: the fate of the concept just is the motor of archival production.

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[46] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 52.
[47] See Laura Millar, 'The Spirit of Total Archives: Seeking a Sustainable Archival System', *Archivaria* No. 47, Spring 1999.

> There is no meta-archive. [... .] By incorporating the knowledge deployed in reference to it, the archive augments itself, engrosses itself, it gains in *auctoritas*. But in the same stroke it loses the absolute and meta-textual authority it might claim to have. [... .] The archivist produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. It opens out of the future.[48]

This is a future defined in its openness to possibility – the anticipation of anticipation maintains the necessary contingency of futurity. By necessity, then, the affirmation of the future is a repetition that is chiasmically linked to the past.

> If repetition is thus inscribed at the heart of the future to come, one must also import there, in the same stroke, the death drive, the violence of forgetting [...] the anarchive."[49]

The double affirmation is connected in Derrida to the thought of the feminine – an opening which circumscribes the possibility of this thesis.[50] If the future is attached to a concept of femininity, so too is the past: to have archive fever "is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement" – the maternal origin.[51]

Like the Célinian mother in Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* (1980), the impossibility of the singular origin recognises the "bankruptcy of the fathers", and enters "a condition of writing, for life given without infinity aspires to find its supplement of lacework within words", that is, within the endless deferrals and displacements of the semiotic. Kristeva opposes the absolute infinite with the

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[48] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 68.
[49] Ibid., p. 75, p. 79.
[50] Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, p. 210.
[51] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 91.

endlessness of the feminine, providing the injunction for this research, if like Céline's maternal, Höch's image can "wreck the infinite".[52]

Note 4 – Thesis Structure.

Each chapter of the thesis indicates turning points in the history of the gender politics of the photographic concepts of infinity, within this overall trajectory: the shift from the negative to the positive valorisation of such endless accumulation. Paramount here is the paradox of the ad infinitum: its endlessness, by deferring or recessing paternal synthesis, is consistently troped not only as endless linear extent, but as a circular, enclosed recess within which finality is hidden.

The first chapter contends that despite the affirmative prognoses for the development of the photographic archive, the origins of photographics are witness to the reiteration of philosophically gendered concepts of endlessness, specifically in the figure of the feminine sublime in its domestic form.

In the second chapter, the feminine appears through an accumulation of concepts bound by their resistance to optical and epistemological perspicacity, their traumatic resistance to synthesis and thus their indication of endlessness. Unable to penetrate the feminine recess, Talbot's processes reside in the liminal space of the domestic threshold.

For the third chapter, containment of infinite detail is formal and erotic, marking a shift in the development of the figure of the archival recess. Stieglitz and Weston represent attempts to contain and control feminine indeterminacy, whereas Strand

[52] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980), New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, p.172, p.161, p.157. However, such endlessness would need to be compared to Höch's universalising tendencies – those present in the appropriation of the feminine colonial other in the mass-media scrapbooks.

represents an attempt to think of the figure of the recess as an affirmation of liberal individualism. In all cases, the attempt to reduce the feminine to an appropriable and penetrated ground is shown to be intensely problematic.

The fourth chapter marks Adams' deprioritisation of detail and attention to expressive tone. Here, the paternal recess and the recess of the feminine have been encroached upon by forces of capital and industry, deprived of the sublime, which reappears again within the domestic milieu. There is a turn toward an affirmation of the archive, at least in a pragmatic sense: the state and institutional forms of the archive are denigrated in relation to the ideality of photographic experience.

In the final chapter, the recess reappears in the psychoanalytic transformation of the sublime. Hollis Frampton's re-reading of the history of photography represents a significant shift in attitude toward archival endlessness, but its positive aspects may be possible because such endlessness has been masculinised.

These chapters are constructed from a series of accumulating and deferring Notes which are intraspersed by subsections of two sorts. Firstly, Grafts which concern the consistent association of femininity and archival endlessness in the history of philosophy may be read in order of appearance, or as an independent chronological narrative: Plato and Aristotle, Longinus, Virgil, Burke, Kant, and Hegel. Secondly, *Impressions* provide points of intersection with the practical dimension of research.

§ 4 – Research by Practice.

Note 1 – Conceptualism and the Milieu of Research by Practice.

Since this research is jointly theoretical and practical, it falls within the institutional conditions of research by practice. It is argued by Fiona Candlin that the contemporary institutional conditions for this mode of research are dependent upon two main historical forces: firstly, the shifts in the idea of art and art-practice toward critical research ensuing from Conceptual art; and secondly, shifts in policy toward recognition of art practice within academic institutions and funding bodies.[53]

The institutional conditions of research by practice are marked by two key moments. Firstly, the reform of art schools in the wake of the Coldstream Report (1960): despite the division of practice and theory at a ratio of 80:20, "the lack of structured and rigorous education in art history (or in studio practice) gave room to more marginal groups and critical stances" – precisely, here, feminism: which "formed one of the main intersections between theory and practice in art schools".[54] Secondly, the increasing emphasis on research culture directed by the RAE: "doctoral programmes in practical art have, on the whole, only been in evidence since postgraduate work became an important issue in the relationship between research activity, status and funding". Hence, research by practice has a contradictory heritage: radical ("intellectual inquiry") and conservative ("financial survival"). Candlin ends with possibility of affirmation: such managerial changes facilitate the possibility of, for example, a feminist critique of the institution.[55]

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[53] Fiona Candlin, 'A Dual Inheritance: The Politics of Educational Reform and PhDs in Art and Design', in *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 2001.
[54] Candlin, 'A Dual Inheritance', pp. 304-5.
[55] Ibid., p. 308, p. 309.

The character of Conceptualism is defined by Peter Osborne according to a collapse of the distinction between the practice of art and the practice of criticism, and an opposition to "sensuous particularity".[56] Outside of Osborne's rhetoric, such particularity is precisely that which, in the philosophy of art until at least Hegel, is determined as feminine, endless, and requiring containment by patriarchal totalisation.[57] Conceptual art is divided by Osborne into two kinds: an "*inclusive* or *weak*" form which explores "the broader metaphysical notions of space, time, and self-hood"; and an "*exclusive* or *strong*" form whose object is the ontological definition of art itself.[58] In the former kind, "it is the *infinite plurality* of *media* that the idea of Conceptual art opens up" – that is: the future of art practice is located in the ad infinitum of combinatory possibilities between the material and ideational. In the latter kind, the future of art is defined as new propositions concerning the definition of art, contained in Kosuth's mantra: 'art as idea (as idea)'. In this sense, the future is located in the infinite regress of the propositional tautology. Initially, the rhetoric of force attending this distinction, and Osborne's attachment to the philosophical, which is historically engaged with generality against feminised particularity, appears to be tacitly reiterating a gendered distinction. The consignment of Adrian Piper to the 'weak' form appears to be indicative in this regard. However, it is precisely the strong form, in Kosuth's practice, which opens back onto the visual, sensuous and aesthetic.[59]

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[56] Peter Osborne, 'Conceptual Art And / As Philosophy', in Peter Osborne, *Philosophy in Cultural Theory*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 87.
[57] See Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, New York and London: Methuen, 1987, pp. 28-9
[58] Osborne, 'Conceptual Art And / As Philosophy', p. 93.
[59] Ibid., p. 99.

In Osborne's reading, Art & Language not only recognise the philosophical complexity of propositions against Kosuth's tautologism, but the "irreducible" and "constitutive" role of the visual against the modernist attachment to "pure visuality".[60] In the challenge to modern visuality offered by Art & Language, "the *reading* of the text was intended to supplant the psychologically loaded business of recovering formal expressive detail. The text thus renders the reader *qua* painting 'reader' homeless". In this context, texts share features with the photographic, but are not "iconic", and suppress "concrete specificity".[61] As indicated by the title of 'Moti Memoria', the detail rather appears where the text is constructed from retrospective textual motes. If Kosuth's distinction between pure and stylistic Conceptualism cannot be maintained, Art & Language are proponents of both deep philosophical research and the style of the archive aesthetic (fig.2).

Fig.2: Art & Language, *Index 001* (1972), texts on paper, index cards, index files, dimensions variable.

[60] Ibid., p. 101.
[61] Art & Language, 'Moti Memoria', in John Roberts (ed), *The Impossible Document: Photography and Conceptual Art in Britain 1966-1976*, London: Camerawork / Camerawords, 1997, pp. 57-8.

If it exists somewhere between the two forms of the ad infinitum indicated above, the work intends not to maintain a place within the classical schema of infinites, but to wreck them. Particularity here intersects with a historically gendered form, but the work is not designed to perpetuate that association – rather: detail, as the necessarily contingent, is the undoing of such oppositions against the classical association of femininity and the ad infinitum, totality and the masculine.

Note 2 – Minimalism and Photography: For a Critique of the Installation Shot.

Consequently, while both aspects of this research are determined by common concerns (photography's relations between endlessness and detail), the practical component of this research is concerned with an alternate aspect of photographic history: Conceptual art and its predecessors – Minimalism and Post-Minimalism. More precisely, it is concerned with the milieu of these genres – the circulation of art through photographic documentation and representation. This is meant in two senses. Firstly, Minimalism "recedes from us as an archival object as the 1960's becomes a historical period. On the other hand, it rushes towards us as artists seek an alternatives to practices of the 1970's and 1980's".[62] Minimalism comes towards us as an archival object. Secondly, the originary complicity of Minimalism with the photographic.

The reception of constructivism through Camilla Gray's *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863-1922* (1962), marks photographic reproduction's potential shift in the appreciation of scale: "Andre saw illustrations of Aleksandr Rodchenko's modular wood constructions where they looked big but you could tell they were not from the

[62] Hal Foster, 'The Crux of Minimalism' (1996), in James Meyer *Minimalism*, London: Phaidon (Themes and Movements) 2000, p. 273.

end-grain"; Judd liked some Pevsners, but was not influenced by them partly because they "looked small in scale".[63] Photography appears as a determining factor in the development of Minimalism as a genre. Such a complicity is borne out in Andre and Hollis Frampton's *12 Dialogues*, where sculpture and photography are defined through a common element – sculpture as a "cut" in space, photography as a "cut" in space and time.[64] This complicity is borne out through the shared relation to opticality in Briony Fer's thoughts on the reversed forms of Andre's *Equivalents*: "[d]espite being fairly dead-pan installation shots, this process of reversal is exaggerated in the fiction of the black and white photographs which recorded the two installations, one dark-light, the other light-dark; the one seems like a photographic negative, almost of the other." The monochrome takes its place to develop the emphasis on the opticality of floor pieces – the different reflectivities and opacities of metals act as cuts in the field of vision.[65]

In this sense, Andre's *37 Pieces of Work* (1969) offers the possibility of a critique of the institutional and political ramifications of minimalism and photography around the canonical Guggenheim photograph of its installation in 1970 (fig.3). *37 Pieces* is marked by a series of divisions attenuating the difference between high and low, general and particular, photograph and object, architecture and corporea, concept and experience. This divisiveness can be represented by the opposing views of Neal Benezra and Suzy Gablik. Benezra, interpreting *37 Pieces* as Andre's "signature work", states that: "These metal plates composed an enormous square in the Guggenheim lobby

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[63] Irving Sandler, *American Art of the 1960's*, New York: Harper and Row, 1988, pp. 245-6.
[64] Benjamin Buchloh (ed.), *Carl Andre / Hollis Frampton: 12 Dialogues – 1962-1963*, New York: The Press of the Novia Scotia College of Art and Design and New York University Press, 1981, p. 55.
[65] Briony Fer 'Carl Andre's Floorplates and the Fall of Sculpture', Ian Cole (ed.), *Carl Andre and the Sculptural Imagination*, Oxford: Museum of Modern Art Papers Vol. 2, 1996, pp. 37-40.

which was meant to be seen from the upper levels of the spiral ramp."[66] Alternatively claiming the signatorial quality of the floor pieces, Gablik states that "Andre once claimed that his ideal sculpture is a road, and in these – what could be termed 'classic' – Andres, of unjoined metal plates placed along the ground, you can walk [...] across them."[67] Comprised by thirty-six six-by-six squares of metal plates, the thirty-seventh piece is the work as a whole. But there is a further regress: each of the thirty-six parts are themselves made up of thirty-six parts, each of which is marked by contingent details – differences in production, scuff-marks from feet, micrological attrition.

Fig.3: Installation shot from Guggenheim Museum (1970), of Carl Andre, *37 Pieces of Work* (1969), plates of aluminium, copper, steel, magnesium, lead, zinc, overall 3/8" x 432" x 432".

[66] Neal Benezra , 'To Speak Another Language: The Critique of Painting and the Beginnings of Minimal and Conceptual Art', in Christos. M. Joachamides & Norman Rosenthal (eds.), *American Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture 1913-1993*, London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1993, p. 250.
[67] Suzy Gablick, 'Minimalism', in Nikos Stangos (ed.), *Concepts of Modern Art*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1974, p. 250.

The installation shot is thus opposed to materiality and contingency, attached to generality and the architectural image of its own authority. What the photographic loses from the work is, precisely, the detail.

Note 3 – Post-Minimalism: Photography and Contingency in Barry Le Va.

To some extent, the work of Barry Le Va can be read as the reinscription of the relation between photography and contingency in a way which is disruptive of the kind of institutional authority represented by the Guggenheim installation shot. Le Va's work marks a point at which the contingent detail occupies a place somewhere between the work itself (as in Andre) and the environment. In Robert Pincus-Witten's reading, Le Va's development of the pictoral or sculptural phase of post-minimalism is not entropic, stating no previous coherence, but "perpetual chaos".

> The irony of this romantic and expressionist position is epitomised in Le Va's comparison between one felt piece arranged by chance through dropping and tossing and another made according to a studious taste-oriented placement. One could not tell one from the other nor say which piece was better owing to a simple paradox: "content is something that can't be seen".[68]

This secrecy is offset: some work is also said to be very direct, with "unequivocal written assertions (rare though they may be) affixed to photographs of the work." The role of photography should not be underestimated in Le Va's work; it appears to be fixed as the supplement of the work's attempted refusal to gratify permanence and ownership, its emphatic environmentality.

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[68] Robert Pincus-Witten, 'Barry Le Va: The Invisibility of Content' (1975), *Postminimalism into Maximalism: American Art 1966-1986*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Institute Research Press, 1987, pp. 137-8. See also Kenneth Baker, *Minimalism: Art of Circumstance*, New York and London: Abbeville Press, 1988, p. 91.

> Much of this work may be misapprehended as conceptual documentation since, in the absence of a gallery audience, Le Va's works were executed in the studio and photographed. Thus the photograph has the character of a point of reference, an archival record of the work […]. Today, all of his work is known only through photographs.[69]

The image is both the beginning and the end of Le Va's process – photography is part of a general economy of the circulation of objects and ideas. At the outset of a continued and entrenched commitment to the medium, Robert Pincus-Witten remarks, "Le Va determined to be a painter, an ambition vaguely informed by images of Pollock and Newman, but as they appeared in *Life* magazine reportages."[70] From here, he moved from Pop-ish painting to mixed painting and cut-outs, then to the scraps and stages of the work rather than the work 'itself'.

Fig.4: Barry Le Va, view of *3rd Installation* (1979), mixed media, dimensions variable.

[69] Pincus-Witten, 'Barry Le Va', pp. 138-9, pp. 137-8.
[70] Ibid., p. 136.

Le Va's career starts out from the greyed reproductions of *Life* halftones and ends up as monochrome photographs – from reproduction to reproduction. The little bits of felt and the broken glass comprising the installations speculatively refer collectively to the destruction of the photographs that will document the work (fig.4). And these photographs can themselves become the material for further explorations of installation through collage. Le Va provides a model for visual research in three senses. Firstly, in its circularity, it provides an understanding the circulation of art through the photographic. Secondly, it represents a transitional stage by which details are partially displaced from the object and into the environment. Thirdly, these details are ambivalently between intention (necessity) and chance (contingency).

Note 4 – Minimalism and Gender: the Myth of the Neuter.

It is something of a critical commonplace to remark on the failure of canonical minimalism to account for gender. In Hal Foster's analysis,

> Minimalism considers perception in phenomenological terms, as somehow before or outside history, language, sexuality and power. In other words, it does not regard the subject as a sexed body positioned in a symbolic order any more than it regards the gallery or the museum as an ideological apparatus [...] it tended to position artist and viewer alike [...] as sexually indifferent, and the same holds for much conceptual and institution-critical work that followed Minimalism. This omission is addressed in feminist art from the middle 1970's through the middle 1980's [...] Mary Kelly and Sylvia Kolbowski, Barbara Kruger and Sherrie Levine, Louise Lawler and Martha Rosler [...] turned to constructions of femininity [...].[71]

In effect, Foster depoliticises minimalism – Andre's engagement with the New York Art Strike of 1970 posited a shift in the nature of the art-archive and the artist's place

[71] Foster, 'The Crux of Minimalism', p. 271, p. 273.

within it: a Kunsthalle model of exhibition (rapid turnover against the commodification of permanent collections); within which the artist functions as docent: "they could explain the connection between politics and their art [...] the artists and their view of the world [...]."[72] And Foster furthers the myth of minimalism's gender neutrality – as I will argue around *12 Dialogues*, it is more the mark of a masculine erotics masquerading under the sign of neutrality provided by abstraction.

If the work of Anne Truitt could provide a counter to canonical masculine minimalism, the story of the detail in regard of the installation shot can be picked up in the feminist art of the eighties. If Le Va marks a transitional phase in the displacement of the detail from the work to the environment, this shift is exceeded in Louise Lawler's series of photographs focussing on the institutional and economic environment of exhibition – for example in *How Many Pictures* (1989) (fig.5).

Fig.5: Louise Lawler, *How Many Pictures* (1989), Cibachrome, 122 x 157 cm.

[72] Carl Andre, 'Artworker': Interview with Jeanne Siegel (1970), in *Artwords: Discourse on the 60's and 70's*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1992, pp. 132-3.

Note 5 – Conceptual Affect.

These practices provide a theoretical backdrop for the photographs bound in this thesis. If Minimalism and Conceptualism move away from and toward us as archival objects, this movement is through texts and images. Indeed, Minimalism's monuments have partly been transformed into a monumental and dispersed photographic archive, for which the installation shot and studio interior are the significant genres. Hence, if Conceptualism is a historical condition for research by practice, the installation and studio photograph potentiate the visual form for a self-reflexive practice.

The images produced in this research represent not only an analysis of their own place of production and display, but of the representation of those places in the historical archive which enables their existence. Given that the object of this research is the gendered relationship between the endlessness of photographic detail and photographic proliferation, the issue for visual work became to think this relationship in terms of these genres.

In Osborne's reading, and "directly contrary to his own self-understanding", Kosuth "enacts an *aestheticization of logical positivism*".[73] The inversion of Kosuth's (effectively Platonic) ideational purity can hence be read as a mark of the fate of the concept. Similarly, the duality of Art & Language – logical rigour and archive aesthetic – may be transposed to the Derridean terminology of the impression: its precise sense attached to logical rigour; its vague sense attached to the ambience of the archive.[74] It is in the relationship between these two senses that my visual work exists. Indeed, if

[73] Osborne, 'Conceptual Art And / As Philosophy', p. 99.

[74] The attempt to evade the relation between art and aesthetic objects turned upon a precise thermodynamic descriptions of "fog" and "cloud" which "is not based on any definite assumptions as to the ultimate constitution of matter". Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin, *Air Show* (1966), in Peter Osborne (ed.), *Conceptual Art*, London & new York: Phaidon (Themes and Movements), 2002, p. 119.

anything, the practical component of this research is more precisely attached to the critical possibilities of the affect of archival ambience.

I should emphasise here that the impression of conceptual unity is, as Derrida says, only a "feeling".[75] In extrapolation, the impression blurs the boundary between effect and affect, intellect and emotion, thought and mood.[76] The impression is effectively a diffuse *image* of unity which breaks down upon detailed inspection. The philosophical sense of conceptual unity would thus be inflected by a strangely visual feeling of security or protection which would be neither an emotion in the common sense of the term, nor an idea in the philosophical sense of the term.

Where Kristeva argues that moods are quasi-semiotic "inscriptions" in *Black Sun* (1987), this provides something of a reversal: philosophical concepts are the inscription of something verging on mood.[77] If for Kristeva, moods are responses to trauma, the impression of conceptual unity represents a reaction to the trauma of epistemological indeterminacy – the limitless, indefinite, and unfinite. In affective terms, philosophy finds its security in logical oppositions (ad infinitum and absolute, feminine and masculine), its insecurity in their destabilisation.

The detail is thus only a particular form of a fear of the limitless, and it too will border the unfinite. Given that affect is placed within a secondary, feminised position by the discourse of logical rigour, the recognition of conceptual affect marks something of a reinscription of a femininity internal to the ostensibly masculine symbolic.

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[75] Derrida, Archive Fever, p. 29.
[76] This is suggested where Derrida connects the digital archive to the haunting presence of paper, and its nostalgic, mournful, or melancholic affects. See Jacques Derrida, 'Paper or Myself, you know ... : (new speculations on a luxury of the poor)', in *Paragraph*, No. 21, 1998.
[77] Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1987), New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 22.

Note 6 – The Form of the Work.

Since art is massively received through the photographic, this required practical endeavour in order to work within the affects of its archive; but this concern also has an epistemological form in the written work – the practices of the photographic tradition in question represent affective responses to the discourses of infinite detail and infinite proliferation. Hence, the labour of practical research was to think the affect of the archive – both in the general sense of desire for protection and feelings of weakness or security, and in the sense of affects particular to objects within the milieu of the archive.

Recorded in colour, the monochromed maquettes and objects of these photographs indicate the reception of art through the photographic, the always-already photographic nature of objects within the spectacle, and the determination of objects through photographic reproduction. They appear as the prefiguring of their own documentation to come, and the past of documentations to which they refer. This sense is suggested by the monochrome installation shots of the 'first' Minimalist exhibition *Black, White, and Gray.*[78] At the 'origin' of Minimalism, then, and rather than only pertaining to a cool style, the object is already haunted by its documentation to come. The signature black, white and grey indicates not only the segmentation of the infinitely smooth photographic tonal curve: the polarisation of the greyscale also refers to the place of these images – the chroma of the text. The objects refer to the furred reproduction of Minimalism's glossy surfaces in books like Battcock's, and to slick tomes appearing now. In this way they also refer to the Conceptual appropriation of the textual and the

[78] Curated by Samuel Wagstaff at Wadsworth Athenum, Connecticut in 1964, it included Tony Smith, Anne Truitt, Robert Morris, Dan Flavin, Warhol, Lichtenstein, Johns and Rauschenberg.

photographic. In their shared chroma, these heterogenous objects are held together – not by a style as such, but by the archival ambience which is their factual milieu.[79]

The objects, forced into dematerialised abstraction by matt painting, or accentuated in their simulacral materiality by over-glossy paint, emphasise the details of the space of exhibition. Such details, traditionally excluded from the remit of the aesthetic proper, are emphasised as signs of labour, process, residua, and contingency. "For Kosuth, 'the context of art' [...] is reduced to no more than a space set aside for the realization of the artist's intention."[80] The neutrality of the object here effects the particularisation of exhibitory space, specifically as an extension of Lawler's series. But the studio backdrop of the monochrome objects is itself repainted in a simulacrum of itself: the details (debris, dirt, imprecise brushwork) hover between contingency and determination – but not romantically, as in Le Va, between the content of tasteful expression and its absence. The ostensible neutrality of the installation shot, one of the last preserves of photographic objectivity, is subject destabilisation: of the difference between art and the non-art moment of the document. In this sense, the work picks up from the feminist critique of the institutions of art represented here by Lawler.

The point then is to highlight the detail, but not as a gendered form: in their ambivalence (both marks of intentional work and marks of contingency) they state that the fundamental encounter with the indeterminate is not on the thither side of the representable, nor attached to arcane, gendered terms; but on this side – an aspect of

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[79] For example, respectively: Gregory Battcock (ed.), *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (1968), California: University of California Press, 1995; James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemic in the Sixties*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2001.
[80] Osborne, 'Conceptual Art And / As Philosophy', p. 97.

quotidian experience. In this sense, the link between theoretical and practical work is explicit: both judge, but only in order to test the limits of determination.

Each object condenses features of objects, images, and concepts, and exists between media – they are non-elemental. Their accumulation does not constitute plethora in the classical sense, although each is loaded with excess significations in order that they are indeterminate. Moreover, each object exists in order to be photographed – the work 'itself' is not the object, nor is it the resulting image: each manifestation or objectification itself stands as an object to be documented.

The work 'itself' never takes place, but is indefinitely postponed: each object exists as a stage within a process which is not an ad infinitum, but unfinite. Each object is also bound by affects emerging from the desire for archival protection, preservation, and conservation. But the work also recognises the anarchivic component attached to such desire: the photographic document's translation of the object always loses the affective specificity of its charge, producing its own specific affect. And each preservative move not only entails a forgetting, but each document itself begs preservation – an endless regress.

Impression 1 – Visual Research: Untitled (Boxes).

It is argued that photography supports art more consistently than photography is received as an art.[81] What remains of Minimalism, thus, is less its monuments and more the monumental form of their photographic containment – as in this photograph (fig.6).

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[81] David Campany, 'Art Photographed: Some Thoughts on Painting and the Book', in Naomi Salaman and Ronnie Simpson (eds.), *Postcards on Photography: Photorealism and the Reproduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge Darkroom Gallery, 1998.

Fig.6: Sas Mays, *Untitled (Boxes)*, maquette (colour photograph, dimensions variable), cardboard forms, black paint, each aprx. 300 x 150 cm.

The boxes which contain, advertise and make transportable the canisters which contain 35mm cartridges (protecting the film from contingent exposure), are flattened out into Minimalistic forms. Rendered massive, they become weak, abject, slumped. The flattened carton refers to the containment of photography in the sense of a double genitive: its containment by the commodity; its containment of objects. The three dimensional installation makes an object from the two dimensionalisation of minimalism. Conversely, the three dimensional package becomes flattened, an image-surface – blackened like the overexposed surface of a photograph.

But it is not only Minimalism that approaches us as an archival object, but photography itself. It is something of a commonplace to refer to the death of photography, but wet chemistry photographics is consistently being displaced by the digital. Indeed, outside of the discourses of craft, and truth to materials, the only benefit of traditional photography is the current cost-effectiveness of its resolution – its reproduction of detail – a superiority which will shortly die.

But these black, angular forms also resist dissolution and thereby indicate a haunting presence – just as the truth-value of the analogue haunts the digital. As Derrida hazards in *Spectres of Marx* (1993):

> [m]ourning always follows trauma. [...] the work of mourning is not one kind of work among others. It is work itself, work in general, the trait by means of which one ought perhaps to reconsider the very concept of production.[82]

In this sense, photographic history is a work of endless mourning. Rather than thinking mourning in terms of economic production, this thesis thinks it in terms of archival

[82] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International* (1993), trans. Peggy Kamuf, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 97.

production. Each photographic practice in question, in its encounter with the infinites, will be analysed as the material accumulation of an attempt not only to master the femininity of the ad infinitum, but also to erase the trauma of the unfinite.

CHAPTER 1 –
The Recurrence of the Recess:
the Gender of Infinite Detail in the Milieu of the Daguerreotype.

Introductory Note – Gender-Political and Philosophical Parameters of Detail for Nascent Photographics.

The public contestation between Daguerre and Talbot, circa 1839, marks competing petitions for the recognition of the photographic as an archival medium within the archives of state law.[1] Their gendered rhetoric of paternal invention indicates an extension of philosophy's thematic of engendering and the patriarchal drive to displace the feminine from the sphere of intellectual reproduction, extending a denigration of biological reproduction which traces through Bacon, Montaigne, and classical thought: as Montaigne indicates, Ovid's Pygmalion marks symbolic incest.[2] And the emergence of the photographic is still pervasively described through gendered tropes which tacitly perpetuate the historical paternity of the symbolic.[3]

Daguerre and Talbot effectively lay claims of ownership to a common set of interconnected infinites, but their superficial difference provides a heuristic starting-point: where the singular, high definition Daguerreotype emphasises endless mimetic

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[1] Batchen contextualises nascent photographic through Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1966): it emerges in the transition between the beginnings of the collapse of Enlightenment natural philosophy and the emergence of the modern episteme. Geoffrey Batchen, 'Ectoplasm: Photography in the Digital Age', in Carol Squiers, (ed.), *Over Exposed: Essays on Contemporary Photography*, New York: The New Press, 1999, p. 12. In this sense, photographics emerge from an archival juncture: at the very point where the Enlightenment dream of the archivisation of absolute secular knowledge begins to crumble, photography offers itself as supplement.

[2] Montaigne would "much rather have produced a perfectly formed child by intercourse with the Muses than by intercourse with my wife". See Montaigne, 'On the affection of fathers for their children', *Essays*, trans. J.M. Cohen, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973, pp. 157-8.

[3] See for example, in *Huellas de Luz: El Arte y los Experimentos de William Henry Fox Talbot*, Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía / Aldeasa, 2000: Catherine Coleman, 'Talbot's Contemporary Relevance', where "Daguerre is the official father of photography but Talbot is the father of modern photography" (p. 399); Larry Schaaf, 'A Little Bit of Magic Realised: the growth of Henry Talbot as an artist', which describes the "first and original idea" (generated by melancholia and Italy the "muse") ... "[t]hus was the idea of photography born" (p. 340); Gerardo Kurtz, 'Talbot: Photographs and Plates', which contrasts the nationalistic and discursive claims to the "fatherhood" of photography, to the "true issue of photographic fatherhood" (p. 357). See also in *Photography: Discovery and Invention*, (catalogue of symposium 1989), Malibu, California: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1990: Larry Schaaf, '"A Wonderful Illustration of Modern Necromancy"', where Talbot's "negatives capable of fathering repeatable prints" gave a sense of victory over the French (p.32); Beaumont Newhall, 'Eighteen Thirty-Nine: The Birth of Photography', in which the metaphorics of birth appear in etiolated, mundane form - at no point does gender occur to Newhall as a subject.

accuracy, the multiple but relatively imprecise Calotype emphasises endless proliferation.[4] If there is no ontological difference between the mechanographic and photographic, the latter is historically experienced as an excessively precise form of copying – in photographic terms, it possesses definition.[5] The discourse of fidelity in representation can be located in classical painting and the grapes of Zeuxis, as much as in sixteenth century oil painting.[6] Such a position is stated in Lyotard's assessment of Benjamin, where photography "was only putting the final touch to the program of ordering the visible elaborated by the quattrocento".[7] The development of the thought of microscopic accuracy emerges also from the discourse of natural philosophy. For example, Bacon's description of the archive of knowledge represented by 'Salomon's House', in *The New Atlantis* (1627), clearly affirms not only the masculine penetration of the secrets of feminine nature, but affirms the appropriation of the microscopic, and the control of subdivision: "[w]e have harmonies [...] of quarter sounds and lesser slides of sounds" – tones, quarter-tones, and micro-tones.[8] Where this taxonomic

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[4] See Roberta McGrath, 'Re-reading Edward Weston – Feminism, Photography and Psychoanalysis' (1987), in Liz Heron and Val Williams, *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the Late 1850s to the Present*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1996, p. 267. Daguerre is attached to the "one-ness" of a "natural birth", Talbot representing "the break-up of the dyadic relationship".

[5] In photographic technique, "sharpness" and "definition" are subjective "impressions" – respectively, of "the crispness and general outlines and contours of an image", and of "the clarity with which fine detail [...] has been recorded". "Acutance" and "resolving power" are technical measurements of fine detail. "Apparent resolution" refers to an impression of definition at normative reading distance which is not supported on close inspection – that is: sharpness may give an impression of definition (infinite detail) which is not supported by acutance. See Arthur Dalladay & Geoffrey Crawley (eds.), 'Technical Section', *The British Journal of Photography Annual* 1967, pp. 241-2.

[6] See Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1983; John Berger et al., *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin, 1972, pp. 88-89.

[7] Jean-François Lyotard, 'What is Postmodernism', *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Brian Massumi, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1984, 1992, p. 74.

[8] Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis* (1627), abridged in John Hollander and Frank Kermode, *The Literature of Renaissance England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 960. The difference between Montaigne and Bacon would be registered precisely in a relation to feminine contingency: Montaigne, self-consciously subject to the "uncertainties and confusion" of feminine fortune, emphasises that part of Plato which reasons

endeavour is applied to the realm of the visible, the photographic opens an extension of natural philosophical discourse: infinite detail.

Naomi Schor analyses the complex coding of detail as negative and feminine within the eighteenth to twentieth century aesthetic privilege of the ideal, the general, and the public against the empirical, the particular, and the domestic; a tradition subject to a positive revalorisation via Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, and Habermas.[9] Crucially, Schor questions whether the apparent degendering of detail manifest in Barthes rather signals its paternalisation – a pervasive issue for this thesis.[10] The sense of an increasing and positive engagement with particularity should also be tempered with the recognition that it is also part of the logic of capital: as Barthes writes, property emerges from the classificatory (archival) division of things in the world.

> Formally [...] ownership depends upon a certain dividing up of things: to appropriate is to fragment the world, to divide it into finite objects subject to man in proportion to their very discontinuity: for we cannot separate without finally naming and classifying, and at that moment, property is born.[11]

"rashly and at random", "because our judgements, like ourselves, have in them a large element of chance" (Timaeus). See 'On the uncertainty of our judgement', Montaigne, *Essays*, p. 130.

[9] Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, New York and London: Methuen, 1987. In Foucault, this revalorisation could be noted in the movement from the "universal legislator" to the "specific intellectual" located in particular struggles with institutional matrixes. Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power' (1977) (Interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino), in Colin Gordon, (ed.), *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980, pp. 126-8. Foucault's 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' (1971) stands as a response to the trauma of historical empiricity which claims not to wrap particularity up in the "cloak" of universals. An explicitly archival activity, genealogy is detailed ("meticulous"), operating "on a field of entangled and confused parchments", but "retrieves an indispensable restraint: it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality". As such, it is not entirely divested of a rhetoric of mastery: in its respect for the detail, genealogy hawkishly "descends to seize the various perspectives, to disclose dispersions and differences, to leave things undisturbed in their own dimension and intensity." Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' (1971), in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. & ed. Donald Bouchard, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977, p. 158, p. 139, pp. 155-6.

[10] Schor, *Reading in Detail*, pp. 3-6, pp. 96-7.

[11] Roland Barthes, 'The Plates of the Encyclopedia' (1980), in Susan Sontag (ed.), *A Roland Barthes Reader*, London: Vintage, 1982, p. 222.

The *Encyclopedia* is a thus a "ledger of ownership", since "to catalogue is not merely to ascertain [...] but also to appropriate". Finite and enumerated details may thus be a sign of capital, and attempts of paternal commensuration. This thesis emerges from Schor's sense of historical shift in general, and from Schor's reading in particular; but it is precisely a point of departure: for a consistent recognition that the detail is attached to the philosophical discourse of the infinites, and that the endlessness of the detail is not only an issue for the totalising knowledge of paternal philosophy, but intrinsically an issue of the collection, storage, and commensuration of particulars – an archival issue. To Schor's sense of the opposition between feminine detail and masculine generality must respectively be added: the contingent and the determined, the empirical and the transcendental, the endless and the finite, totalised, or absolute. The detail is coded feminine by philosophy and aesthetics not only for its contingency, but because it pertains to a certain form of endlessness: the ad infinitum.

Within its extension of Western philosophy, the photographic marks something of a shift in the feminine characterisation of the archive. Firstly, there is a sense of increased regulation over the circulations of capital. In Kant, for example, the mechanical production of texts within the contingency of the market is finally, if only by prognostic optimism, determined by the dialectical ascendancy of reason.[12] Both Daguerre's and Talbot's sense of the epistemological and social function of the photographic is one that gestures toward determinate knowledge through the market. Early photographic discourse is marked by a positive affirmation of the financial and epistemological circulation and storage of the very objects which for Hegel are feminine

[12] See Immanuel Kant, 'On the wrongfulness of unauthorized publication of books' (1785) and 'On turning out books' (1798), in *Practical Philosophy*, Mary Gregor (ed.), The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 1999, p. 30, pp. 626-7.

and indeterminate: aesthetic objects – their material accumulation and their epistemological progress.[13] Secondly, since photographic discourses are not strictly beholden to philosophy, the denigrations of idealism are not in operation in an extensive sense. Thirdly, there is an acclimatisation to technology – the synthetic power of the photographic allows positive valorisation against the Romantic fear of mechanicity. The issue, then, is the extent of transformation of philosophical discourses' gendering of the endless archive. If there is a shift, a positivisation and masculinisation, early photographic theory and practice maintains a key philosophical figure in opposition to masculine epistemological and theological totality: the femininity of the recess – a form connected to the 'bad sublime'.

§ I – The Infinites in the Milieu of the Daguerreotype.

Note 1 – The Gender of Totality and Infinity: the Masculine Appropriation of Feminine Nature.

If the sublime marks the encapsulation of nature's immensity by reason, Arago's 'Report' (1839) claims the visual encapsulation of the ad infinitum of external nature – in Western philosophical terms, the masculinisation of the feminine. Among the myriad uses for the process and its collections, finitisation and totalisation are the key effects.[14] Despite an epistemological framework in which such distinctions are problematic, there are two basic sets of objects which come under the gaze of the Daguerreotype.[15]

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[13] See G. W. F. Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (1820-29), in Michael Inwood (ed.), trans. Bernard Bosanquet, London: Penguin, 1993, pp. 5-6, p. 10, p. 38.

[14] Both the aesthetic and scientific, in Sekula's terms of fetish-magic and truth-document, reside in the "mythical truth-value of the photograph", which I am arguing to be partly dependent upon its relation to infinite detail. See Alan Sekula, 'On the Invention of Photographic Meaning' (1975), in Victor Burgin (ed.), *Thinking Photography*, London: Macmillan, 1982, p. 94.

[15] The Daguerreotype appears as "one of those rare moments where art and science come together, an image laboratory". Michael Frizot (ed.), *The New History of Photography*, Köln: Könemann, 1998, p. 51.

On the one hand, there are cultural and aesthetic objects (hieroglyphs and paintings), and on the other, natural-scientific objects, (stellar bodies and fossils). The former are quantitatively totalised, whereas the latter may yield objective knowledge without being enumerated.

The "millions" of "innumerable hieroglyphs" would take "legions" of draughtsmen "decades" of time to document, where one Daguerreotypist could accomplish the "immense" task. The process is thus seen in its qualitative and quantitative fidelity to a visual field: it exceeds the finitude of manual reproduction and totalises numeric excess in the speed of its comprehension. But the necessity of such recording is also imposed by the termination of the extent of the field through the "greed of the Arabs and the vandalism of certain travelers".[16] Given that colonialism positions the ethnic in the abjected position of the feminine (Kristeva), this implies photographic determination (preservation) against (historical) contingency and femininity.

In terms of photometry and geology, the scientific-optical advances of the telescope and microscope open onto "myriads of new worlds" – through infinite addition and infinite subdivision.[17] Against the existing lack of objectivity concerning light intensities, and hence the objective position of the sun "among the milliards of suns with which the firmament is bespangled", telescopic process allows absolute photometric intensity to be fixed for non-simultaneous comparison.[18]

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[16] Dominique François Arago, 'Report' (1839), in Alan Trachtenberg (ed.), *Classic Essays on Photography*, New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980, p. 17.
[17] Ibid., p. 22. On the chiasmic relation between telescopic and microscopic in Kant, see Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (1978), trans. Ian McLeod, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 131-47.
[18] Arago, 'Report', p. 21.

The microscope, inversely, from a "minute fragment" of stone, opens onto the depth of geologic time: giving view to "milliards and milliards of microscopic animalcules" which are part of the process toward understanding "the beginnings of life".[19] Just as stellar infinity may be subject to determinate knowledge, the infinity of animalcules are an uncountable plethora which nevertheless indicate a finite point: the origin (arché) of life. Daguerreotypy captures the infinite complexity of nature, locating its elementary particles because it appears grainless, infinitely detailed. Paradoxically then, epistemological totalisation occurs through an impression of infinite subdivision which matches the complexity of nature – totality immanent within the photographic ad infinitum.[20] Effectively, since totalisation and determination are philosophically and culturally masculine traits in this period, the photographic represents the masculinisation of contingent nature.

Graft 1 – The Femininity of the Archival Ad Infinitum: Longinus.

Longinus does not represent part of the republican philosophical milieu; nevertheless, 'On the Sublime' allows an indication of a common structure by which feminine infinity is constructed. The history of philosophy is littered with references to

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[19] Ibid., p. 23.

[20] For historical accounts of the enablement of telos through infinite precision see Samuel Morse (1839), cited in Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997, pp. 136-7. See also Samuel Morse, letter, New York *Observer*, 19th April 1839, cited in Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present* (Revised Edition), London: Secker & Warburg, 1982, p. 16, pp. 22-23. Such historical descriptions are reiterated at a contemporary level: Newhall notes that a "detail of a still life of fossils he [Daguerre] made in the Conservatoire de Artes et Métiers can be enlarged without losing sharpness"; Szarkowski describes the Daguerreotype's "mindless, hypnotizingly precise description of surfaces"; and again Keeler notes "the relentless prosaic description of the Daguerreotype". See: Beaumont Newhall, 'Eighteen Thirty-Nine', *Photography: Discovery and Invention*, (catalogue of symposium 1989), Malibu, California: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1990, pp. 20-21; John Szarkowski, 'Early Photography and Modernism', *Photography: Discovery and Invention*, p. 100; Nancy Keeler, 'Souvenirs of the Invention of Photography on Paper: Bayard, Talbot, and the Triumph of Negative-Positive Photography', *Photography: Discovery and Invention*, p. 52.

infinites which are not technical but rhetorical – for example: 'but to give all the details would be endless'.[21] A version of such rhetorical usage occurs in 'Daguerreotype', where "infinitely varied experiments" have led to the successful development of the process.[22] This success has been achieved, as Arago adds, through "endless laborious, delicate and costly experiments".[23] The economic demand behind this hyperbole is clear. Such 'weak' forms are similar to the impression of the literary sublime: in a delivery of compacted metaphors too swift for enumeration by the listener, the impression of tumult can produce sublime effect, and thus a relation to the divine – through an enforced retraction from enumeration. This form of retraction is like that by which the photographic ad infinitum is constructed: scientific descriptions of infinites appear opposed to the rhetorical, but the sense of the infinite subdivision of the plate is the product of a phenomenal impression – a sign of organic and technical finitude which retracts from specificity. Hence, the relations to divine absolute and rational telos are couched in a similar impression of infinity, in which the technical and the rhetorical become indistinct. If this structure is the foundation for Longinus' position as archon of the dispersed archive of literary collections, or as the literary theoros in petition to the Roman state, so too is it part of the foundation for Arago's petition.

For Longinus, the dearth of the sublime is not an effect of Rome's nondemocratic rule, but of an internal warfare of the passions governed by love of and enslavement to

[21] The ad infinitum has many avatars; other than the mathematical, all indicate its construction in a rescinding totalisation of endlessness which creates its image - among which should be recognised the 'weak' rhetorical forms: "and so on", "etc", "ad nauseum", "passim", and ellipsis (...).
[22] Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, 'Daguerreotype', in Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays*, p. 11.
[23] Arago, 'Report', p. 17.

money and pleasure. [24] Given Aristotle's sense of the social function of Katharsis, the sublime is an intrinsically political issue. Longinus, affirming this relation between aesthetics and politics by identifying with the state at one stroke politicises and depoliticises the sublime by placing accountability for its dearth within internal morality,. In this dearth, divinity is replaced by a god of "boundless wealth", and proliferating vices which, given liberty, would cover the world.[25]

The premonition of negative proliferation links to the economic regulation performed by the Greek archons and presages the recognition of the circulations of capital as a negative infinity. Against it, 'On the Sublime' mobilises a massive defence of literary mimesis, in which experiential impressionism and literary repetition now function, in a deferent parricide of Plato, as a remedy for such infinite proliferation.[26]

The identification with the state is contiguous with a reconciliation with writing which involves, as the emphasis on Homeric heroism indicates, a masculinisation of the text. The state speaks, through the priests and archives of its laws, as the voice of eternal order. Literature, through its archival forms, speaks of or as this order too – as the contiguity of legal and literary rhetorical techniques suggests.[27] Arago stands in a similar position of petition to the state, but this chapter will mark ensuing conflicts between state and capital, legal and photographic archives.

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[24] Longinus, 'On the Sublime', § 5, § 44.6-7, trans. W.H. Fyfe, Loeb Classical Library 199, Aristotle XXIII, Cambridge, MA & London, England: Harvard University Press 1999, p. 177, p. 303.
[25] Ibid., § 44.6-12, p. 303-7.
[26] Ibid., § 38.2-3, p. 282-3.
[27] Ibid., § 20.3, § 22.1-2, p. 237, pp. 239-40.

Note 2 – The Archival Dimension of the Daguerreotype: the Accumulation of Images toward Totality and Endlessness.

The structure of retraction subsists the archival claims of the process, enabling Daguerre's description of the "rapidity, sharpness of the image, delicate gradation of tones" and the "perfection of the details", which, amounting to "a perfect image of nature", indicate an archival ramification.

> Everyone, with the aid of the DAGUERREOTYPE, will make a view of his castle or country-house: people will form collections of all kinds, which will be more precious because art cannot imitate their accuracy and perfection of detail […].[28]

This fidelity enables the affirmation of the tautology of the process, as that which "gives nature the power to reproduce herself".[29]

Fig.7: Daguerre, *Shells and Fossils* (1839), Daguerreotype.

[28] Daguerre, 'Daguerreotype', p. 11, p. 12.
[29] Ibid., p. 13.

Daguerre's image *Shells and Fossils* (1839), taken in the Conservatoire National des Artes et Métiers, and thus an archival image in two sense, places itself as an extension of the ability to generate natural copies (fig.7). But the aesthetic application of the Daguerreotype is explicitly attached to the feminine: among "the leisured class", "the little work it entails will greatly please ladies".[30] The very statement of broad application drives a wedge between aesthetic and scientific collections of images as a class division marked as a difference between masculine and feminine. As a sign of those unwilling or unable to labour, the feminine is here close to a cultural thought which is expressed in Rousseau's image of woman: "passive" and "frail", but nevertheless of use to the patriarchal family as "a supporter by nature".[31] As Andrea Nye indicates, passivity and restraint are 'female virtues' which ensure paternity.[32] The obverse of this positive image of the feminine is a fear of uncontrolled sexuality: in *The Confessions*, "morality and marital fidelity [...] are at the root of all social order".[33] This fear of the uncontrolled also pervades the archival politics of the Daguerreotype.

While Daguerre and Arago indicate an extension of traditional archival accumulation, the tension between the photographic and existing technologies and institutions of archiving is indicated in Elizabeth Anne McCauley's analysis of the commercial development of photographics in Paris between 1848 and 1871. By 1852, proposals had been made to the Louvre to copy large parts of its collections in order to create a "photographic museum". The state's "fluctuating attitudes toward photographic copies" are marked by: the commissioning of images, for example, in 1855 and 1856, in

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[30] Ibid., pp. 12-13.
[31] Andrea Nye, *Feminist Theory and the Philosophies of Man*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 31-2.
[32] Ibid., p. 6.
[33] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions* (1765), trans. J.M. Cohen, London: Penguin, 1954, p. 405.

order to expand the market for reproductions; and the seizure of unauthorised collections in 1858 as a recognition of "the damage that photography could wreak" upon the domain of the state museum. What is at stake in this conflict between state and private collections, state and capital, is clearly "uncontrolled" reproduction – one which evades or confuses the paternal claims of ownership, authorship and authority.[34]

Fig.8: Maurisset, *Daguerreotypomanie* (1839), lithograph.

The mid-nineteenth century is marked by an exponential rise in the quantitative production of images, and the Daguerreotype itself indicated proliferation: Maurisset's caricature 'Daguerreotypomanie' (1839) depicts an excessive, crazed, and disordered populace, a delirium of capital, machines and mercury fumes reaching into the horizon,

[34] Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *Industrial Madness: Commercial Photography in Paris 1848-1871*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994, pp. 278-92.

without end – the singularity of the plate is no restraint upon infinite proliferation and its indeterminacies (fig.8).[35]

Speculating on the abject, this image envisages 'savage' dancing culturally connected to uncontrolled sexuality – the excess pleonexia of capital feminises the populace. In this sense, the caricature reiterates the trope of femininity in social form – as excess, ad infinitum: the bad sublime.[36]

Note 3 – The Image of the Domicile in Daguerre's *Still Life*: Paternal Order and the Resistance of the Feminine.

Batchen remarks that Daguerreotypes are ambiguously attached to both rational scientificity and to the aesthetic.[37] The period is witness to the meeting of the aesthetic and rational-scientific, but there is an extent to which Daguerre associates the aesthetic with the feminine, the scientific attached to active masculinity. Daguerre's images may also sustain a negative impression of the feminine which equates to the bad sublime.

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[35] Comparatively, Nancy Keeler describes the milieu of Daumier lithographs as "the overheated carnival atmosphere [...] part of the political and economic scene in July Monarchy France." Nancy Keeler, 'Inventors and Entrepreneurs', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 2002, p. 27.

[36] Such proliferation is not necessarily negatively marked: mass production of carte de visite photography is enmeshed with forces of social categorisation, and in this sense, proliferation is in the service of regulated totality. Thus, with the impression of the Encyclopaedic archive, Daguerreotypy gestures toward the forensic – Bertillonage: photography as a mode of surveillance whose history would be enmeshed with the massive drive of the eighteenth century toward social categorisation as the inverse mark of increasing socio-economic mobility. See Peter Hamilton and Roger Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned: The Creation of Identity in Nineteenth Century Photography*, London: Lund Humphries in association with The National Portrait Gallery London, 2001, passim. The move from Daguerreotypy to carte de visite indicates an exchange of infinites - proliferation displaces infinite detail: "the resultant pictures were so small that their faces could not be studied". John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essay on Photographies and Histories*, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988, p. 50. Mass demand often outstripped production, causing a financial opening for black market recopying: these social uses of the photographic indicate a mass market for which proliferation is not a necessarily negative issue.

[37] Batchen indicates this duality, but elides the gendering of the desire of and for photography in the attention to the origins of its processes: the analysis of *Still Life* (1837), despite brief reference to Ballerini's interpretation of its mytho-sexual resonances, is worryingly neutered in its description of desire. See Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, p. 132. This failure is amended, to some extent, in later essays, for example: 'Patterns of Lace', in *Huellas de Luz;* and 'A Philosophical Window', in *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 2002.

Still Life (1837) is thought to have been taken in Daguerre's atelier – a studio and a cabinet of curiosities, a domicile and a work-place: a site of the consignation. It offers an abbreviated history of modes of reproduction – cast, bas relief, lithograph, and implicitly, the camera obscura.[38] The plate posits its origin, and its future application, in the industries of aesthetic reproduction. But within the relation to Daguerre's other images, this history of reproduction includes the natural cast of the fossil, refering to the natural-scientific milieu. Through the lens cap centred between the cherubim, the Daguereotype is self-reflexively included within this history, positioned at the compositional centre and as the apex of forms of reproduction (fig.9).

Fig.9: Daguerre, *Still Life* (1837), Daguerreotype.

[38] On the complex relations between engraving, lithography and photographics between 1815 and 1860, in which previous forms determine the way in which the latter is received, see Stephen Bann, 'Photography, Printmaking, and the Visual Economy in Nineteenth-Century France', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 2002.

The inside of the domestic scene reflects the exteriority of cultural figures, offering the possibility of ordering the contingency of the world.[39] The regulative economy of spatial arrangement and composition, the consignment of objects into determinate space, offers a taxonomy of gendered forms of reproduction, a consignation which enacts the (masculine) determination of (feminine) contingency. Batchen notes through Julia Ballerini that the ram, nymph, flask, and bouquet visualise the natural cyclicality of a sexual reproductivity driven by masculine vitalism.[40] In this sense, the image represents the pastoral regulation of engendering, in which Daguerreotypy would be an extension of a controlled economy of reproduction, a good birth.

The reproduction of masculine images within the domestic scene functions as the symbolic substitution for reproduction of paternity through biological reproduction. In Irigaray's reading of the paternal economy of the domestic scene, "The boy child is the sign of the seed's immortality, of the fact that the properties of the sperm have won out over those of the ovum. Thus he guarantees the father's power to reproduce and represent himself [...] ensures that the patrimony will not be squandered. And as heir, he also enriches the 'house' by one more member".[41] The consignment of women to the domestic scene is in order to "maintain coital homeostasis, 'constancy'", to "bind" the drives within the marital organisation – the feminine "will also be the place referred to as 'maternal' where the automatism of repetition, [...] the infinite regression of pleasure can occur": "death makes a detour through the revitalizing female-maternal".[42]

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[39] A similar argument is given for Bayard's photographs of aesthetic objects, in Russell Roberts, 'Traces of Light: the Art and Experiments of William Henry Fox Talbot', in *Huellas de Luz*, p. 368.
[40] Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, p. 132.
[41] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 74. See also p. 79.
[42] Ibid., p. 53.

In this role, then, woman "will also be the representative-representation [...] of the death drives that cannot [...] be perceived without horror, that the eye (of) consciousness refuses to recognise" – a horror which refers not only to the mother's but also to the father's castration.[43]

Irigaray argues that male engagement with the female is a necessary detour for a reproduction of self which is essentially auto-erotic; whereas the female attempts to produce a child of the same sex as the father as an extension of penis-envy.[44] If femininity proper is only established by the substitution of the desire for the penis by the desire for a baby, the wish for masculinity is visible in the latter form.[45] This implies a hazard, though it would require exit from the terms of Irigaray's thought: that the masculine desire for symbolic progeny manifests an analogous lack, effectively placing the masculine in the position of a femininity desiring to be masculine. This might potentiate a masculine femininity differentiated from the maternal ideal set up by the masculine post-Oedipal ego-ideal, which is only "the protective and reflexive extension of his 'own' gaze".[46] Here, woman is the (photographic) negative which is only admitted to positivisation as a reflection of the masculine.[47] The desire for symbolic progeny would not only indicate the attempted usurpation of biological reproduction by sublimated forms, but would also suggest the incipient castration of the masculine.

The embrace of the couple in the lithograph, a closer union than that posited by the nymph and the ram, indicates a multiplicity of prints to which the Daguerreotype cannot accede. The attachment to the singular casts of fossils precisely indicates the

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[43] Ibid., pp. 54-5.
[44] Ibid., pp. 95-6.
[45] Ibid., p. 73.
[46] Ibid., p. 81.
[47] Ibid., p. 22, p. 82.

failure of Niépce's dream of multiplicity. The atelier image appears to be compositionally ordered around the vertical axis of the plate's lateral reversal – the difference of the Daguerreotype from nature.[48] The axial difference marks the failure to fuse natural (singular) and technological (multiple) reproduction. The lithograph is part of an ad infinitum of copies, but the Daguerreotype cannot so easily proliferate by contact. Such an image would have to be rephotographed to reproduce itself, so that at each repetition encounters the phantom of pure singularity, but with the consequent degrading of detail. Should photomechanical prints be made, this signals an exit from the photographic. In this way, the Daguerreotype's natural tautology is undermined by the mechanographic. Nor, like nature, can it reproduce autonomously – it is constrained in its operations by the need for natural light. If such autonomy is recessed from the reproduction of the Daguerreotype, and perhaps this recessing is figured by the closed flask, this sense of the enclosure of autochthonous forces is noted by Barthes.[49] The flask is a womb-like enclosure within the recess of the domicile, and that which the lens cannot probe. Its interior remains forever secreted, an inside that cannot be inverted – an image, potentially, of the feminine alter-image of the divine recess which resists immanence, its opacity resisting visualisation and synthesis. Its form also implies a content: its association with wine could also indicate delirium, but the philosophical context of this image suggests that it might claim something like the rationalising penetration of the flask.

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[48] This axis partially centres a series of gendered figures which are overlapping: rather than a replete set of binaries, there are relations of difference in which originate the meaning and heterogeneity of these signs.
[49] Roland Barthes, 'The Plates of the Encyclopedia', (1980), in Susan Sontag, (ed.), *A Roland Barthes Reader*, London: Vintage, 1982, p. 220.

Impression 2 – Visual Research: Untitled (Nest).

Daguerre's atelier image exists as a punctuation within the history of the graphic depiction of the artist's studio – one of the first moments of the photographic development of the genre. In this history, the studio functions ambivalently, but partly as the womb of masculine creativity – a site of mystery, immanence, and masculine vitalism. In Brassaï's images of Giacometti's studio published in *Minotaure* in 1933, the corner is a privileged site – a dark recess within the enclave of the studio occupied by a womb-like feminine form half-hidden by precisely ordered clutter and framed by phallic forms.[50] In this way, the photograph records the masculine appropriation of the rhetoric of engendering; the studio appearing as archival proof of masculine birth (fig.10).

Fig.10: Brassaï, *Atelier de Giacometti*, in Minotaure, No. 3-4, December 1933.

[50] See Jon Wood, 'Close Encounters: the Sculptor's Studio in the Age of the Camera', in Penelope Curtis & Stephen Feeke (eds.), *Close Encounters: the Sculptor's Studio in the Age of the Camera*, Leeds: The Henry Moore Institute (exhibition catalogue), 2002, p. 16.

Derrida's thought on the desire to archive "everything" which happens and does not happen within the traversing of the subject by a multiplicity of ambivalently gendered literary voices

> involves an immense forbidden desire [...] to invent (language and in language), but one which would refuse to show itself so long as it has not cleared a space or organized a dwelling-place suited to the animal which is still curled up in its hole half asleep.[51]

This moment, heavily laden as it is by a Heideggerian thought of dwelling, is nevertheless confessional, diminutive, affective. Between inscription and erasure, these voices, traces of material inscriptions, constitute the matrix which creates the recess of the dwelling-place.

These textual, archival voices may also be thought of as images – an interwoven multiplicity of remnants all but destroyed in order to provide the image of protection; marking presence and absence, archive and archive fever, eros and death. For this piece, a maquette was made of a pile of shredded photographs in the corner of the studio. The maquette was photographed, and a proliferation of prints were made, shredded and placed in the corner of the studio. This scene was photographed, providing material for another accumulation, another image; and so on. Rather than the site of a masculine appropriation of feminine reproduction, the nest in the corner of the studio marks the un-doing of opposition and appropriation (fig.11).

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[51] Derrek Attridge & Jacques Derrida, '"This Strange Institution Called Literature": An Interview with Jacques Derrida' (1989), trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, Derek Attridge (ed.), London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 40.

Fig.11: Sas Mays, *Untitled (Nest)*, maquette (colour photograph, dimensions variable), shredded photographs, dimensions variable.

§ 2 – Daguerreotypy and the Gendered Sublime.

Note 1 – Rousseau: the Paternal Sun against the Earth's Recess.

Arago's affirmation of the archival function of Daguerreotypy, the visual comprehension of things in the world, is contiguous with the totalising drives behind Diderot and D'Alembert's editorship of that Enlightenment monument – *L'Encyclopédie* (1751-1776). Likewise, Daguerre's atelier image reproduces forms of copying which are related, via the images of fossils, to the activities of natural scientific exploration and mining which unearthed such objects in the quest for metals and industrial fuel. To gauge the gender-political implications of the image it is necessary to turn to the symbolic connotations of science and industry. Rousseau's involvement in the encyclopaedic project represents a contradiction played out in the symbolic values ascribed to industry and natural resources: where the *Encyclopedia* affirms the technological appropriation of the earth's secrets, Rousseau figures such recesses in negative feminine form. But while Arago's technicism contrasts with Rousseau's romanticism, a brief detour indicates the continuity of gendered figures between these discourses.

The opposition between the good and bad forms of femininity is a structuring principle of Rousseau's thought, and bears on a theory of representation that intersects with the tautology of the Daguerrean plate. The natural is maternal and replete, the supplement of culture being accidental and aberrant – contingent.[52] But culture is itself supplemented by the vegetable: plants represent natural life against the dead usefulness of metals. In Derrida's reading of *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1782),

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[52] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (1967), trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, pp. 145-6. All emphases and additions to Rousseau's text are Derrida's.

mineralogy is part of industry's loss of natural sensibility, metals being "enclosed in the breast [womb – *sein*] of the earth" (Rousseau).[53] Rousseau provides a philosophical counter to the fossils of Daguerre's images, for the mining for copper and silver for the plate, and the mercury vapours of its development, where man "buries himself alive", subject to the "poisonous vapours of mines", substituting "the heart [womb] of the earth for that of green fields and flowers".[54] Through agriculture, metallurgy is at the origin of society and contiguous with unnatural language, with which blinded man "flies from the sun and the day", in comparison to the ancients, who "spent almost their whole lives *in the open air*".[55]

> In all of this, no women; but they were quite able to find them in case of need, and we do not find [...] that intelligence, taste, or even love lost anything by this reserve.[56]

Woman is thus secondary, inessential, associated to an intestinal and womb-like recess which, in *Émile* (1762), is opposed by the good recess of the divine: "He speaks Himself; His words are written in the secret heart".[57] Subject to this law, the 'good' feminine is respected and exalted by man; she must be submissive, to "govern without being mistress" (Derrida).[58] The figure of femininity which equates to this basis (in order to supplement Mamma – the supplement of Rousseau's internal "void") is the passive femininity of Thérèse: "[h]er mind is as Nature made it; culture and teaching

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[53] Ibid., p. 148.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., p. 149, p. 148, p. 178.
[56] Ibid., p. 178.
[57] Ibid., p. 174.
[58] Ibid., p. 177. The differentiation of gender in this text is more complex than this might suggest - for Kristeva *Émile* "postulates a difference of sexes at the *origin* of society, but also at the moment of its perversion-perdition". See Julia Kristeva, 'The Adolescent Novel', in John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (eds.), *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: the Work of Julia Kristeva*, London and New York: Routledge 1990, pp. 15-16.

have no effect". The obverse appears where Rousseau is displaced from erotic engagement with a courtesan on the pretext of a contingent detail: the "malformed nipple" – an "imperfection of Nature" transforms the feminine from the "charming" to a "monster".[59] Against the opposition between the divine and geological recesses, Daguerre's tautology of nature reproducing herself suggests the return to nature via the detour of the earth, the detour of science – the Daguerreotype has a redemptive function. In this way, the flask signifies multiply: it contains the figure of the bad feminine recess, but also suggests that its darkness may be brought back to light. Within this redemptive reading pf paternal control, each detail within the image would appear compositionally ordered, domesticated, consigned. In Daguerre's atelier as a site of visual signs, we should recall Rousseau's emphasis on the natural effectivity of the "proto-writing" of visual rather than audible signs, and the emphasis on the domestic (pre-social) use of silent signs by 'savages'.[60]

Graft 2 – On the Femininity of the Archival Ad Infinitum: Plato.

Rousseau implies an archival antipathy where the nostalgia for mute immediacy associates the ad infinitum and entropy: "[a]nd to the degree that the rules of imitation proliferated, imitative language was enfeebled".[61] This gendered phonocentrism, opposing "effeminate books", is rooted in a classical thought for which the gendered opposition between philosophy and the textual archive is manifest.[62]

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[59] Cohen, *The Confessions*, p. 386, p. 311, p. 301.
[60] Ibid., pp. 239-40, p. 282, p. 292, p. 253.
[61] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp. 205-6, p. 209.
[62] Cohen, *The Confessions*, p. 405.

In *Archive Fever*, domiciliation involves a combination of the guardianship of the material substrate of inscription and the interpretation and expression of its inscriptions – the archons hence guard the future of the law.[63] In Aristotle's account, the law is inscribed on tablets of stone, but the necessity of their interpretation, the necessity of the archon's presence, indicates – in Plato's terms – the indeterminacy, or fatherlessness of the text.[64] Philosophy is defined as the determinacy of paternal reason, writing by an endless and indeterminate wandering which effectively emasculates paternal control.[65] This schism between philosophy and the legal archive is instanced in Plato's 'Phaedrus', which specifically marks off law as a degraded, written form of discourse in comparison to philosophical dialogue.[66] In the dialogues centred on the censure and death of Socrates, subjection to the *archon basileus* indicates that the archive of philosophical right in the Academy is opposed to that of state law. The rhetoric of the 'Apology' genders this division – as Saxonhouse indicates: "[j]ustice will be accomplished when the city becomes a surrogate father to Socrates' sons as Socrates had been father to the citizens of Athens."[67] In Derrida's *Dissemination* (1972),

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[63] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995), trans. Eric Prenowitz, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 2-3. This attitude indicated in Aristotle's remark that "Solon ratified his laws for a hundred years". Aristotle, 'Constitution of Athens', § 7, in Jonathon Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, New Jersey & West Sussex: Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 2344.

[64] Plato, 'Phaedrus', 275e, in Edith Hamilton & Huntingdon Cairns (eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1999, p. 521.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 278e, p. 524.

[67] Arlene Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity: The Birth of Political Science in Ancient Greek Thought*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 106-7. Saxonhouse provides a nuanced analysis of the problematic gender characterisation of the polis. In this conflict between the origins of the unity of the polity in earth as mother and in paternal speech (p. 113), the feminine exists as an effect of resistance to totalisation. Nevertheless, there are forms of resolution, as the comparison of Aspasia ('Menexenus') and the Aleatic Stranger ('Statesman') indicates: "[f]or Aspasia the woman, autochthony allows her to take a stand against the masculine war, to assert the primacy of birth. In so doing she must emphasize a unity that seems to exclude the male as the male had previously excluded the female. It is the Aleatic Stranger, a moderate man himself ('Sophist' 216b), who can include difference within the community as Aspasia the female cannot" (p. 131). In the terms of this thesis, what this kind of description indicates is not the recognition of the feminine, but the

"Socrates supplements and replaces the father" just as "dialectics supplements and replaces the impossible *noeisis*, the forbidden intuition of the face of the father (good-sun-capital)."[68] Thus, the censure and parricide of the paternal state is played out as a relation to the institution of the archive – a mode of paternal relation which will also be played out around the photographic archive in the tradition analysed in this thesis. By the injunction to the court – to "decide where justice lies" – Socrates adopts the position of a guardian of right (an archon), or an interpreter of the law (an *exegete*), but one who does not have a written archive (domicile or arkheion) other than that provided by Plato.[69] The separation of law and right marks a historical moment of attempted usurpation, played out as a displacement of written by spoken truth, the archival by the ontological, inscription upon material by inscription upon the psyché.

Classical philosophy produces heterogeneous forms of femininity – not only the heterogeneity of the strangely transcendental khora which in Derrida's *Dissemination* functions as mother, nurse, receptacle, and substrate; the place of the undoing of opposites – intelligible and incomprehensible, eternal and ad infinitum.[70] The khora is but one production of the feminine, which must be ranked alongside those of the gods, and those of historical specificity. These other forms will each in their own way be attached to concepts of good and bad femininity and to concepts of infinity. In 'Phaedo', Penelope's repetitive labour, taking place in the domicile, is attached to the ad infinitum. In Irigaray's interpretation of this weaving as – the "wrapping" of the

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homogenisation and totalisation of the feminine within the paternal logic of the dialectic - which precisely gathers up particulars into a unity.

[68] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (1972), trans, Barbara Johnson, London: Athlone Press, 2000, p. 167.

[69] Plato, 'Apology', 35e, *Collected Dialogues*, p. 20. This appears in opposition to the centralising and archiving drives of the state: by the time of Solon, Aristotle points out in the 'Constitution of Athens', the domiciles of the archons had been merged into one architectural housing, along with other state institutions.

[70] Derrida, *Dissemination*, pp. 159-63.

differences and "faults" of Nature into abstract, homogenous unity in order for exchange and commodification – it represents a 'good' femininity whose endless labour is to gather the infinity of differences into the finitude of paternal totality.[71] What is at issue, then, is the projection of feminine infinity into domestic terms.

Socrates' wife Xanthippe makes two appearances in 'Phaedo'.[72] Firstly, a 'hysterical' moment: the feminine (in the irrationality of its organ: *hysteros* – womb) appears in the wrong place and at the wrong time (among the dialogical circle in its affirmation of eternal life). She is excluded from the enlightened relation to death formed in the paternal circle, is returned to the proper place of the paternal construction of the feminine – consigned to the domestic scene *(oikos)*. Secondly, she is recalled to receive Socrates' last orders. Just as the archons guard the future of the law, Socrates' paternal function is to administer his household in the future after his death, to maintain the economy *(oikonomos)* of the house. Xanthippe's first appearance is contingent, aleatory and problematic; and necessary, determined, and functional in its other. In comparison, the khora appears in the wrong place because problematising space, and in the wrong time because disturbing the possibility of origin, sequence, linearity. In this way the khora disrupts the establishment of relations between finitude, ad infinitum and the eternal.

These appearances – unexpected, uncontrolled – begin to provide a way of conceptualising the feminine: as an appearance of some thing in some place which is out of place, out of time. Such displacement, such untimeliness, is a character of the

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[71] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987, pp. 115-6.
[72] Plato, 'Phaedo', 60a-b, 116b, *Collected Dialogues*, p. 43, p. 96.

future.[73] At least, two futures are implicit: one associated to the 'good' feminine which is proleptically controlled by paternal determination, another attached to the 'bad' feminine which is uncontrolled. And this kind of division of the feminine is a defining feature of the milieu of the Daguerreotype in nineteenth century political discourses.

Note 2 – Marx: the Gendered Division of the Daguerreotype and the Economy of the Spectral.

Reference to Virgil's association of metal-working peoples as purveyors of bad, lapsarian techné with the effeminacy of the Arabians would constitute a classical precursor to Rousseau's thought.[74] In Paul Mattick's reading, the 'bad' feminine in Rousseau is associated with excess sexuality and social disorder, and figured through the sphinx – an image of the "bad sublime".[75] Schor indicates this association in Baudelaire: "the crowd and the female are on the same continuum in the nineteenth-century male imaginary".[76] The 'good' feminine is figured for Mattick by Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830); this pro-revolutionary image being described as a positive form of the feminine.[77] But within the remits of this thesis, *Liberty* may also be the form of an appropriated femininity. The figure is reiterated by Marx's affirmation of the stability of the Paris Commune (1871) in its freedom from the contingencies of

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[73] "Here is a kind of question, let us still call it historical, whose conception, formation, gestation, and labour we are only catching a glimpse of today. I employ these words, I admit, with a glance toward the operations of childbearing - but also with a glance toward those who, in a society from which I do not exclude myself, turn their eyes away when faced by the as yet unnameable [...] the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity." Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' (1966), in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1978, p. 293.

[74] Virgil, *Georgics*, in H. Fairclough, *Virgil I*, Harvard MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, l.57, l.467. See also R. F. Thomas, (ed.) *Virgil - Georgics: Volume 1 Books I-II*, [Commentary] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 77-8.

[75] Paul Mattick, 'Beautiful and Sublime: "Gender Totemism" in the Constitution of Art', in Peggy Brand and Carolyn Korsmeyer (eds.), *Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, p. 39.

[76] Schor, *Reading in Detail*, p. 21.

[77] See Mattick, 'Beautiful and Sublime', p. 37, p. 43.

crime, where "the real women of Paris showed again at the surface – heroic, noble, and devoted, like the women of antiquity."[78] The affirmation of liberté at one stroke consigns the feminine to the patriarchy of fraternité.[79] To such statements would need to be compared: those in 'Wage Labour and Capital' (1847) concerning the relation between the mechanisation of labour and the place of female labour in capital; those in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) condemning the bourgeois prostitution of female community, and the gendered rhetoric of the 'birth' of the proletariat.[80] There is a conflict in Marx between explicit affirmations of female emancipation and the rhetoric of their delivery: the former advocates new recognition; the latter mired in historically embedded tropes – a conflict which impacts upon the figuration of the Daguerreotype.

The description of Poulot's (1870) appropriation of the discourse of the sublime in order to describe the 'bad' worker opens an entry point for analysis of the gender politics of the relation between the aesthetic and the socio-political.[81] Against the order of the bourgeois family, *sublimisme* is characterised by female prostitution, and applied

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[78] Karl Marx, 'The Civil War in France' (1871), Selected Writings, David McLellan (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 549.

[79] For a feminist critique of the latter term of Liberté, Egalité et Fraternité within this context, which rejects Marx's correspondence between woman and nature as a reduction to male appropriation, and which attacks the sentimentality and romanticism of nineteenth century revolutionary images of women, see Andrea Nye, *Feminist Theory and the Philosophies of Man*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 52. For a brief discussion of the feminine as pure use value (mother), pure exchange value (virgin) and use and exchange (prostitute) in Irigaray's 'Women on the Market', see Jane Rendell, 'Thresholds, Passages and Surfaces: Touching, Passing and Seeing in the Burlington Arcade', in Alex Coles (ed.), *The Optic of Walter Benjamin, de-, dis-, ex-* Vol. 3, London: Black Dog Publishing, 1999, pp. 172-3, p. 183. Rendell describes femininity and touch via Irigaray's thoughts on mucous, and masculinity and sight in terms of the spectacle of commodities: the relation between Marx and Irigaray would open the possibility of thinking the difference between optic and haptic in gendered terms, which would be pertinent for further analysis of the Wendell Holmes text pursued in this chapter.

[80] Marx, *Selected Writings*, p. 266, p. 235, p. 227.

[81] Poulot registers an antipathy to the inversion of gendered hierarchies – against the 'natural' inferiority of the bourgeois wife, the wife of the 'sublime of sublimes' past their prime "take over and 'wear the trousers'". Zola's appropriation of Poulot towards the ends of "bourgeois voyeurism" enacts an imaginative penetration of the domestic scene which will be the paternal process of Wendell Holmes. See Alain Cottereau, 'Denis Poulot's *Le Sublime* – a preliminary study', in Adrian Rifkin and Roger Thomas (eds.), *Voices of the People: The Social Life of 'La Sociale' at the End of the Second Empire*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1998, pp. 106-7, p. 157.

to the women of the Commune.[82] Such characterisations represent a fear of disorder (contingency) which is stated in terms of national politics in Mendès' historical account.

Fig.12: Appert, *Untitled* (1871), photomontage.

The relation between paternal order, emasculation, and contingency is evident where the toppling of the Vendôme Column is both the destruction of the past – "unearthing your fathers" (Mendès) – and the production of "an uncertain future" (Ross).[83] So too was the photographic sublime implemented by conservative forces – in the form of infinite detail: as Doy notes, Appert's composite fakes are suspicious precisely in the depth of their "precision and clarity" (fig.12).

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[82] Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, pp. 15-16.
[83] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

The camera is part of a conflict marked by a metaphorics of sexual reproduction – Doy also notes a reiteration of the 'birth' of the proletariat in photographic form and the representation of women by the state during the Commune.[84] Marx's comments about female Communards might be seen as a political attempt to deflect such negative symbolic determinations, but its secondarisation is evident compared to another historical account (1876): "[w]omen started first, as they did during the revolution. Those of March 18, hardened by the war in which they had a double share of misery, did not wait for their men."[85]

The recourse to figures of feminine subservience might signify contingent political 'necessity' then, but Marx's discourse is also suffused by gendered rhetoric – for example: the section of *Das Kapital* devoted to 'The production of Surplus Value' (1865-6), concerning the division between nature in its "virgin state" and as "raw material".[86] This appears to posit feminine nature as ontological neutrality, against Rousseau's dangerous earth, yet if the virgin state of nature has value for man as an "original larder", and would thus not be entirely pure or neutral, the opposition between nature and culture would be dialectically complex.[87] The opposition between use and exchange value, which mirrors that between the virgin and the raw, to the extent that both propose an original substratum, is subject to a sustained analysis which disrupts their dialectical relation in Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* (1993).[88] Derrida provides an

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[84] See Gen Doy, 'The Camera Against the Paris Commune' (1979), in Heron and Williams, *Illuminations*, p. 29, p. 31.
[85] Ibid., p. 19, p. 22.
[86] Marx, *Selected Writings*, p. 456.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 147.

extended analysis of 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' (1851); the latter text being significant for this thesis in its reference to the Daguerreotype.

Marx's intersections with the feminine occur in this text in three instances. Firstly, where the immanence of the Empire within the parliamentary republic means that the second coming is not conjured by the black magic of Circe, but already exists fully formed. Secondly, in the corollary recourse to the image of the violated feminine state, and which would indicate virginity as the arché of the inviolate. Thirdly, the recognition of the fishwives' political power – a recognition which goes some way to counter the comments on the Commune.[89] Yet, as Derrida's analysis of 'The Eighteenth Brumaire' indicates, this text concerns "a *patrimonial* logic of the generations of ghosts" which will include the spectre of Hegel, to whom Marx is connected by the logic of filiation.[90] This logic, if Stirner the 'bad son' sterilely mimics Hegel, requires an element of differentiation – a difference, displacement or even parricide of the patriarch in order to be a good son.[91] If, likewise, proletarian revolution is haunted by the bourgeois revolutions of which it is something of a repetition, such a filiation requires a forgetting which is figured linguistically by Marx as a forgetting of the 'mother tongue': "the forgetting of the maternal in order to make the spirit live in oneself" (Derrida) – acceding to the place of the patriarch requires the erasure of the feminine as origin.[92]

In the wake of Derrida, we would also have to think of the relation between the communist and bourgeois revolutions as a form of repetition which could not be

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[89] Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in McLellan, *Karl Marx*, pp. 314-5 - p. 304, p. 317; p. 311.
[90] Derrida, *Spectres*, p. 107.
[91] Ibid., p. 122. The idea of parricide is a feature of *Archive Fever* where a "still vivacious" idea of democracy is contained in this homosocial filiation. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 95.
[92] Derrida, *Spectres*, p. 109.

extracted entirely from its predecessor. This would also suspend revolution between two forms of the infinite – the ad infinitum and the absolute: as Derrida remarks, spectral blurring

> passes between a mechanical reproduction of the specter and an appropriation that is so alive, so interiorising, so assimilating of the inheritance and of the "spirits of the past" that it is none other than the life of forgetting, life as forgetting itself.[93]

The spirit of communist revolution must erase the archival memory of the ghost of the bourgeois in order to come into being. This figure of forgetting repeats the very figure of erasing the maternal origin which inhabits not only bourgeois thought, but the thought of Western philosophy from Plato onwards.

I should note, in an extension of Derrida's general sense of the paternality of Marx, the specific rhetoric employed against the bourgeoisie. The "*coup de main*" (force) of the first revolution is imitated in the "*coup de tête*" (risk) of the second.[94] This opposition of determination and contingency echoes repetitiously within Western philosophy's feminisation of the latter. The second revolution is characterised by the borrowing of language, disguise, heroism – a repetition which is described in terms of weakness, passivity, degeneracy, smallness, and, finally, "impotence".[95] Desiring to be the 'patriarch', Bonaparte is thus emasculated: "France has experienced a government of mistresses; but never before a government of *hommes entretenus* [kept men]".[96] France, as the good feminine, is "dishonoured" (violated) by this bad, emasculated,

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[93] Ibid., p. 109.
[94] Marx, 'Brumaire', p. 302.
[95] Ibid., p. 303, pp. 309-11.
[96] Ibid., p. 324.

feminised body.[97] If not determining the gender of capital *per se*, this should indicate the gender of capitalists for Marx, and, in extrapolation, the gender of a revolutionary coup de main. It seems pertinent then that Marx finishes this text with a premonition of the toppling of the Vendôme Column: a symbolic fetish or prosthetic phallus which substitutes and masks bourgeois castration.

Now, the femininity of the second revolution is hidden through art that plunders the ghosts *(Spuk)* of the past, whereas the true spirit *(Geist)* of revolution requires a poetry of the future.[98] Of these arts, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire' places the Daguerreotype within a complex historical temporality, and within a complex sense of representation.

> During the months of September and October rumours of a *coup d'état* followed fast one after the other. Simultaneously, the shadow took on colour, like a variegated Daguerreotype.[99]

This description is opaque: 'variegated' may refer to the chroma, tonal differences and flickering effect of the plate or to an over-painted plate.[100] In the first sense, the plate would represent the immanence of the second bourgeois revolution, prior to its becoming institutionalised flesh, but the materialisation of something shadowy, insubstantial. In the second sense, the Daguerreotype would represent this revolution's effeminate disguises.[101] It should be remembered that photo-retouching intersects with

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[97] Ibid., p. 317.
[98] Ibid., pp. 301-2.
[99] Ibid., p. 310.
[100] Talbot, for example, refers to "the variegated scene of light and shade" represented by the photograph. See William Henry Fox Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch of the Invention of the Art' (1844), in Mike Weaver (ed.), *Henry Fox Talbot: Selected Texts and Bibliography*, Oxford: Clio Press, 1992, p. 77.
[101] Marx, 'Brumaire', p. 315, p. 310, p. 322.

the gendered division of labour: it was generally considered feminine and female work in nineteenth century Europe.[102]

The Daguerreotype is a figure of historical development which is degenerative in comparison to the endless self-criticism of the proletariat.[103] The Daguerreotype thus indicates a future which is a repetition of the past – a second coming which is parodic, theatrical, parasitic; which feeds vampirically on the body politic through its machinisation and fragmentation – an element within the rationalisation and commodification of the social. It is then part of a logic of substitution – Louis Napoleon the *remplaçant* of Napoleon Bonaparte, the second bourgeois revolution the remplaçant of the first.[104] It is also part of a logic of bureaucratisation and hence archivisation: ownership passes from the land itself into the "register of mortgages".[105] The secreting of power into the archive has its corollary in the image of wage slavery as mining for metal, and the reduction of the peasantry to "troglodytes" in hovels without windows.[106] Bourgeois culture is characterised not only by disguise, but by a dissembling interiorisation, a movement toward dark recesses. In this association, Marx appears to describe something like Rousseau's mine, but in specifically social and archival terms.

Speculatively then, an unretouched Daguerreotype represents an original event, a moment of positive infinity, a stage of the history of development toward communist

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[102] On the rising percentage of female labourers in photographic employ, see John Taylor, 'The Alphabetic Universe: photography and the picturesque landscape', in Simon Pugh (ed.), *Reading Landscape: Country – City – Capital*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, p. 179. See also Judith Freyer Davidov, *Women's Camera Work: Self / Body / Other in American Visual Culture*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1998, p. 81. The history of the relation between the photographic and the painterly, with which retouching intersects, is more complex than this might suggest, involving shifts in their gendering under the pressures of social use. See Steve Edwards, 'A "pariah in the world of art": Richter in Reverse Gear', in David Green (ed.), *Where is the Photograph?*, Brighton / Maidstone: Photofusion / Photoworks, 2003.
[103] Marx, 'Brumaire', p. 303.
[104] Ibid., p. 321, p. 324.
[105] Ibid., pp. 321-2.
[106] Ibid., p. 302, p. 320.

revolution; an authenticity which would be parodied by manual intervention. This reading would be supported by Marx's sense of the positive strength of the first bourgeois revolutions of 1848. But this gendered differentiation is suspect: just as proletarian revolution is filiated to its bourgeois predecessors, Derrida argues that spirit and spectre cannot be entirely separated. Contiguously, the unretouched Daguerreotype enables the dead to remain in the future; the plate suspended between life and death – a differential presence. The unretouched plate would thus also be suspended between its normative and retouched conditions, masculine and feminine positions – if the "logic of borrowing" which characterises filiation blurs the boundary between "parody and truth".[107]

Note 3 – Sekula: The Resistance to the Aesthetic and the Requirement for Maintaining the Gendered Analysis of the Sublime.

To return to the *Encyclopedia*, Marx's reference to the Daguerreotype as a division of parodic bourgeois mimesis and the possibility of active proletarian force inverts the opposition of activity and passivity registered in Sekula's (1983) reading of Diderot's division of labour. In this separation of manual and intellectual labour, manual work is "specific, contingent, habitual, unchanging"; learned through an "endless need to repeat the same actions" – an ad infinitum, against which science "was to be the motor of progress" – the positive infinite. As Diderot's rhetoric suggests, knowledge must be extracted from the labourer, mining the unconscious to produce archives of knowledge, and this activity is carried out through "the function in which Socrates gloried, the painful and delicate function of being midwife of the mind, *obstetrix*

[107] Derrida, *Spectres*, p. 109.

animorum".[108] Sekula obviates explicit attention to the gendered dimension of such oscillation, despite evident points of intersection. For example: to the detriment of respect for the knowledge of and dignity of manual labour, Agricola was "resurrected as a father of mining engineering at the beginning of this century, in what was yet another example of confident bourgeois historicism".[109] To develop the gendered terms of this division, we must pass through the positivistic moment described by Sekula in Arago and Nadar.

Sekula notes Agricola's absolution of mining from the negative effects envisaged by Rousseau: "[f]or all its dark toil, mining is claimed here as a force of civilisation and light".[110] As indicated by the taxonomic function of Daguerre's image, the photographic promises a "global inventory or archive of appearances [...] taken directly from nature".[111] Scientific and passive, the camera signifies "both the domination and preservation of nature", the remains of the past preindustrial world (romanticism), and future technological progress (scientism).[112] For Sekula, the photograph, as the miner, appropriates from nature which may resist extraction and transformation, but this resistance is divorced from the arcane, gendered terms of the sublime. Thus, "[f]or all its messy contingency, photography could be accommodated to a Galilean vision of the world as a 'book [...] written in the language of mathematics'".[113]

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[108] Alan Sekula, 'Photography Between Labour and Capital', *Mining Photographs and Other Pictures 1948-1968: A Selection from the Negative Archives of Shedden Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton*, Benjamin Buchloh and Robert Wilkie (eds.), Halifax: The Press of the Novia Scotia College of Art and Design & The University of Cape Breton Press, 1983, pp. 212-3.
[109] Ibid., p. 214.
[110] Ibid., p. 206.
[111] Ibid., p. 217.
[112] Ibid., p. 218.
[113] Ibid., p. 219. Sekula, citing Arago.

The encyclopaedic tendency is registered in John Taylor's analysis of the impact of scientific discourse upon the photographic surveys of 1890's Britain, and in terms which recall the classical terminology of the archive. The thought that "[i]n principle, photography could measure the world", allowing the "alphabetification of the visible universe" risked attempting to record "everything" – totalising an ad infinitum: "all 'social states'; all types of faces; all aspects of work; all beasts; all flora [... ...] and all natural objects". Intended to be preserved, mounted and labelled by "most trusted officials, a keeper of the albums", the photographs were "intended to be deposited in reference libraries – guardians of public knowledge".[114] Here, photographers mimic the function of the theoria, depositing the memory of aesthesis for the protection of the archons. If the archons in classical Greece were the guardians of the law, so too these more modern collections carried their own ideological and political weight.

Sekula reads Nadar's subterranean images in this mode – they "can easily be read as pictorial expressions of technological optimism" – citing Nadar in corroboration:

> The world underground offered an infinite field of activity no less interesting than that of the top surface. We were going into it, to reveal the secrets of its deepest, most secret, caverns.[115]

The infinite here is an object for a finitising drive, just as the infinite detail of the Daguerreotype allows epistemological telos. Sekula refers here to Barthes' essay 'The Plates of the Encyclopedia' (1980) and its description of a positivistic "world without fear" through the "momentary taming of the sublime by electric light".[116] Sekula signals a certain debt to Barthes, but the latter's recognition of a violence toward nature "fails to

[114] Taylor, 'The Alphabetic Universe', pp. 185-8.
[115] Sekula, 'Photography', pp. 223-4.
[116] Sekula 'Photography', p. 223, p. 225.

perceive" the violence of the division of labour into workers (objects of knowledge) and intellects (subjects of knowledge).[117]

Sekula describes Barthes' recognition, via the surreality of the plates, as "the muted resonance of the sublime, an unnameable and awesome plenitude of nature" which displaces and defers an "analytic reason" that hence "never achieves its goal".[118] In this way, Sekula indicates Barthes' aestheticisation of instrumental realism; and in otherwise ignoring (muting) this "muted" force, obscures the gender politics of the appropriation of nature, by neutering that figure.

The image of passive nature subject to technological, scientific and masculine appropriation is historically entwined with the image of feminine passivity.[119] The problem is to think the resistance of nature to appropriation in a mode which is neither "spiritualist" nor "materialist" in aestheticist or reductive senses.[120] Within the recognition that sex is a category of gender, that nature is a category of culture, the question remains: "[h]ow do we conceive the body no longer as a passive medium or instrument awaiting the enlivening capacity of a distinctly immaterial will ?".[121] The beginnings of an answer would be found where the failure of prohibitions "do not always produce the docile body that fully conforms to the social ideal", in a way which

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[117] Ibid., p. 215. Indeed, Barthes' sense that the plate's resistance to intelligibility stems from their proximity to experience appears to reiterate the very division which Sekula analyses, and in a way which is contradictory to Sekula's attachment to lived experience. See Barthes, 'Encyclopedia', p. 227.
[118] Sekula, 'Photography', p. 216.
[119] See Carolyn Merchant, 'Women and Ecology', *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, London: Harper Row, 1980, pp. xix-xxiv.
[120] See Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism*, London: Zed Books, 1993, pp. 13-20.
[121] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 1-25.

would be pertinent to Sekula in the engagement of the materialities of body, signifier and nature through Althusser.[122]

Barthes' sublime is a force that displaces and defers telos – a figure of the ad infinitum which is historically gendered. But for Sekula, resistance to rationalisation does not emerge from the aesthetic, or from the mechanism of language itself, but from social practice: the workers' deliberate dumbness in the face of Diderot's attempts to mine unconscious knowledge enacts conscious resistance.[123] This kind of resistance is part of an oppositional logic, which is, as Derrida remarks to Houbedine and Scarpetta in *Positions*, to remain within metaphysics: the task of deconstruction is the endless destabilisation of the recurrence of such opposition.[124] If it is the character of metaphysics to homogenise difference through the sign of neutrality which masks paternal bent, Sekula's recourse homogenises a social body by inattention to the intra-repression of the sexual division of labour. This is deleterious given the obverse of photographic objective realism: the subjective, sentimental realism of the family album, with all of the gendered power relations within which and which it inscribes.[125] To mute the gender of the proletariat is to ignore part of the symbolic mechanism by which bourgeois culture has maintained power: as the association of manual work, the ad infinitum, and the feminine indicates, bourgeois thought claims the symbolic castration of labour.[126]

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[122] See Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: on the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, New York and London: Routledge, 1993, p. 63, pp. 68-70.
[123] Ibid., p. 214.
[124] Jacques Derrida, 'Positions: Interview with Jean-Louis Houbedine and Guy Scarpetta', in Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (1972), trans. Alan Bass, London: Athlone Press, 1981, 1987, pp. 41-2.
[125] Sekula, 'Photography', p. 222.
[126] Sekula, outside of these gendered terms, notes that class conflict is a conflict of representations. Sekula,. 'Photography', p. 250.

Sekula recognises that social portraiture carries gender-political ramifications.[127] Nevertheless, gender drops out as an analytical tool: antipathy to the sublime as a category of bourgeois thought reiterates the gendered thought of the domination of nature, if in rhetorically neutralised form. The concept of the sublime is "inadequate to explain the experience of people whose lives are expended in the material domination of nature". Miners are, here, too close to danger to be able to assume the necessary spectatorial distance for the experience of the sublime.[128] Against this proximity, Sekula cites a "ritual exorcism of the terror inherent in underground work" by which "[t]he sublime is named, mocked, and invoked repeatedly in stories, gestures, and jokes."[129] Sekula also notes a resistance to sublime spectacularisation where mine workers resist the photographing of an industrial accident.[130] But such resistance can also be seen as a proximity to or reiteration of the sublime: the repeated, ritualised exorcism is the mark of a traumatic relation to contingency and death – it endorses, rather than excises, a (Freudian) concept of the sublime.[131] Such rituals would function as a way of assuming a spectatorial position to a contingency that is too real. In this sense, the resistance to the documentation of death would be, as much as a mark of the recognition of dignity, a mark of another repression: of the sublimity of death and the document. But these terms also posit a resistance to visual reproduction and dissemination (excessive proliferation) which is outside of the subject's control.

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[127] Wedding photography indicates the exchange of women in Straussian terms. Sekula, 'Photography', p. 256.

[128] Le Doeuff notes the possibility of a relation between Agricola's probing of the earth and the invention of forceps as signs of an aggressive, penetrative, masculine order, but resists the return to mother nature against science – like the issue of aestheticisation resisted by Sekula. Michelle Le Doeuff, *The Sex of Knowing* (1998), trans. Kathryn Hamer and Lorraine Code, London: Routledge, 2003, p. 144.

[129] Sekula, 'Photography', p. 252.

[130] Ibid., pp. 252-4.

[131] See Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, London: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 11, 1984, 1991.

Note 4 – Barthes: the Place of the Feminine and the Domestic Sublime within the Rational Image.

In order to reinscribe the gender of the sublime we must return to Barthes. The instrumentality of the *Encyclopedia* treats all objects in the world as appropriable by archival order (the catalogue). The gender implications of the "absence of secrecy" and the taming of the sublime are clear: objects are "born", "fraternal" man "mines" the passive plenitude of nature in a metaphorics of birth.[132] The encyclopaedic object is finitised – "subjugated", "signed", scaled, and humanised. In comparison, the contemporary relation to the object verges on the ad infinitum: "assimilated to an unhuman state of nature, its proliferation cannot be noted without a sentiment of apocalypse or alienation".[133]

Barthes' move is to apply this feminising negative infinity to the paternally finitised images of the *Encyclopedia.*[134] The encyclopaedic "world without fear" does not exclude the monstrous, which appears surreal rather than terrifying. The accumulation of objects and their "thousand names" moves toward limitlessness: "that great undifferentiated substance of which verbal or pictoral poetry is the mode of

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[132] Barthes, 'Encyclopedia', pp. 219-20.
[133] Ibid., p. 223.
[134] Barthes represents an anachronistic attachment to photography's archaic thought of infinite grainlessness, and thus a resistance to the historical process of the loss of wonder. Barthes' conception of photography is partially structured around this discourse – at least from 'The Photographic Message' (1961) to *Camera Lucida* (1980). In the former, infinite detail is not named as such, but the decrepit vestige of its scene appears – where the photograph album and the magnifying glass appear within another photograph. Barthes reads this coupling of objects as a sign of aged loss of sight and a desire for memory. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, London: Harper Collins, 1984; Roland Barthes, 'The Photographic Message' (1961), in Stephen Heath (ed.), *Image Music Text*, London: Fontana Press, 1977, p. 17, p. 23. For reasons of expedience and emphasis, I retract here from the saturated field of the punctum as a mode of the detail. For an analysis of the detail as studium and punctum within the historical association of the detail and the feminine in aesthetics, see Schor, *Reading in Detail*, pp. 79-95. Schor analyses the punctum as "a subject, apprehended in his or her most intimate specificity" (p. 95): for an analysis of the punctum as a mark of the infinite idiosyncrasy of the subject within the context of Derrida's deconstruction of the infinites, see Marian Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 121-5.

knowledge".[135] This implicitly marks a reiteration of classical metaphysical images of the mother, and the maintenance of feminine figures is clear:

> the image of the womb is actually quite enigmatic; yet its metaphoric vibrations [...] do not contradict the original traumatism attached to this object. [....] It is this profound order of metaphor which justifies – poetically – the recourse to a certain category of the *monstrous* [...]: the enigmatic womb [...].[136]

Hence, the plates exhibit duality: an objectivity, reality, and rationality which is "overcome" by its others – the poetic, the sublime. Such duality is registered as a disturbance within the domicile. On one hand, "the vignette is calm, reassuring; what can be more deliciously domestic than the kitchen garden with its enclosing walls".[137] This figure of the good feminine, finite and determined, opens onto another indeterminacy, since on the other hand, the more analytic plates give on to "violence". "All the forces of reason and unreason concur in this poetic disquiet; [...] metaphor itself makes an infinitely ambiguous object out of a simple, literal object".[138] Barthes reverses the sublime in a complex manner: the infinite appears as both the birth of an archaic womb resurrected in surreal form and the mad product of the rational and new – its future. This allows an understanding of the objects of Daguerre's atelier image: the flask is a sign of the failure of photographic taxonomy not simply as a figure of a content which is recessed from its finitising grasp, but in its excessive significations. Its very blankness and objectivity are the potentiation of its explosion of that degree zero, that impossible denotation.

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[135] Barthes, 'Encyclopedia', pp. 230-1.
[136] Ibid., pp. 231-2.
[137] Ibid., p. 233.
[138] Ibid., p. 234.

Barthes' sense of the poetic carries subjectivism and romanticism in its opposition to the rational, just as the affirmation of infinite endlessness against the finite object remains within the terms of metaphysical concepts. Barthes' sense of the poetic is characterised by two effects: a disproportion which effectively reiterates the classical definition of the sublime; and an immobility which does not simply record action, but signifies excessively, signalling the impurity of the documentary moment.[139] In Derrida's analysis, however, the photographic sublime just is the impossible moment of the document – and in this sense art and non-art, aestheticism and objectivism collapse chiasmically.[140] Hence, to argue that the resistance to rational finitisation emerges from the mechanism of signification *per se* enables a critical space beyond that aporia.

§ 3 – Positive and Negative Accounts of Infinite Detail.

Note 1 – Wendell Holmes: Penetrating the Universality of Femininity through the Appropriation of Infinite Detail.

An historical expression of the milieu of photography's domestic sublime is provided by Wendell Holmes' 'The Stereoscope and the Stereograph' (1859) in its complex affirmation of infinite proliferation through a return to a lineage of thought stemming from the pre-Socratics. Here, bodies give off infinitely thin and infinitely proliferated *exuviae* (forms, images, membranes, films). The photographic is a technique which fixes exuvia; stereoscopy's "perfect illusion" taking "infinite care" of the scene it depicts. [141] "*Form is henceforth divorced from matter.*"[142] Thus,

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[139] Ibid., p. 232.
[140] Jacques Derrida, 'The Photograph as Copy, Archive and Signature' (1993), in David Campany (ed.), *Art and Photography*, London: Phaidon Press, 2003, p. 220.
[141] Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'The Stereoscope and the Stereograph' (1859), in Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays*, p. 72, pp. 79-80.

> [t]here is only one Colosseum or Pantheon; but how many millions of potential negatives they shed – representatives of billions of pictures – since they were erected. Matter in large masses must always be fixed and dear; form is cheap and transportable. We have got the fruit of creation now, and need not trouble ourselves with the core.[143]

In Holmes' hyperbole, the proliferation of actual images is relatively finitised in comparison to the infinite skins of form – "a few" stereographic views will suffice to supercede the object: the inclusive detail of the photograph means that the object can be contained by a finite number of images. Despite the initial affirmation of an ad infinitum of images, Holmes affirms a finitising, totalising archival drive: "special libraries" of stereographs are related to money, as "promises to pay in solid substance".[144] This 'archive', like a bank, would be a point of circulation, as well as accumulation. It appears, given that the object or gold-standard may be destroyed, that the stereograph is both the promise and the return of the object, if in another guise.[145] Stereoscopy literalises the pre-Socratic ad infinitum within logic of controlled circulation, placing the impression of the archive right back in the domicile of the archons: the nomological – the voice of the paternal, but commercial rather than state law. In Plato's account, the archons administer and control prices, imports and

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[142] Ibid., p. 80.
[143] Ibid., p. 81.
[144] Ibid., p. 81.
[145] The economic background to Holmes' America is given in Ian Bell, 'The Hard Currency of Words: Emerson's Fiscal Metaphor in *Nature*', *ELH* Vol. 52 No. 3 Fall 1985. The 1830's were a time of rapid shift from agrarian to industrial economy (p. 734), with the absence of a national paper currency, and doubts concerning a currency without a bullion basis leading to political debates concerning the "abuse of democratic and constitutional rights" and "manifest opportunity for Fraud and for political corruption" (p. 739). If this does not render Holmes' affirmations somewhat satirical, it suggests a shift in acclimatisation to such an economy: if Emerson resists the commodity's amnesia of processes of production and use-value, Holmes affirms the amnesia of nature.

exports.[146] In mediating financial proliferation and reduction, the archons adopt a similar relation to excess as does the mediating function of dialectics in terms of infinity through addition, subtraction, and subdivision.[147]

Sekula's 'The Traffic in Photographs' (1981) develops the analogy between money and photography as universal forms of exchange. In its referential proximity to nature, photography is a technology which is paradoxically primitive: it colonises both the past and the future.[148] In this analogy, the controlled proliferation of circulating images would indicate the totalisation of culture (a homogenisation of communicative differences), but this universal is clearly the expression of Holmes' own colonising domesticity. In an extension of Sekula, this double appropriation is evidently embedded in Holmes' essay, given that it draws together pre-Socratic thought and the thought of the technological future, metaphysical classicism and scientistic functionalism. But what appears as the universal in Holmes is not simply cultural specificity masquerading as nature, but the forms of the infinites. Holmes' discourse indicates that the photographic cannot be thought outside the meta-relation between the infinites, nor outside their culturally, historically, and technologically specific gender and archival forms. The meta-terms of Holmes' analogy between image and money are the infinites, and control of the ad infinitum of details, images, and tokens allows a relation to universality which is played out through the control of the feminine.

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[146] Plato, 'Laws', Bk.VIII, 850a-b, *Collected Dialogues*, p. 1413. Plato here refers to the "thirty-seven" rather than the nine archons, yet they are "curators in the first place of the laws, and in the next of the records in which every citizen has made his return to the officials of the amount of his property" (Plato, 'Laws', Bk.VI, 754d-e, p. 1335).

[147] See Aristotle, 'Physics', Bk.III, 203a15, *Complete Works*, p. 404 - concerns Plato on the excessive forms of the great and the small, and their curtailment. On the relation between infinite accumulation and dialectical determination, see Plato, 'Philebus', 16d-e, 18c-d, and 'Pheadrus', 277b-c, *Collected Dialogues*, p. 1092, p. 1094, p. 522.

[148] Alan Sekula, 'The Traffic in Photographs', *Art Journal*, Spring 1981, *passim*.

Speculatively, it is the sense of paternal economic control which allows Holmes' descriptions of sublime excess. Stereoscopic vision is haptic: the mind learns to 'feel' its way into the depth of the image, encountering that which might "scratch our eyes out": "there is such a frightful amount of detail, that we have the same sense of infinite complexity which Nature gives us."[149] Sublimity is affirmed in reference to war, in its premonition of flash lighting – a technological sublime – lightning as a natural photographics in its burning of bodies. Stereography is inscribed by the "pencil of fire" – a Promethean light.[150] While Holmes does not gender these forms of sublimity, the historical division is implicit: the ad infinitum of the stereograph, on a continuum with the infinity of feminine Nature, threatens blindness like a Medusa; but photography also appears as the masculine appropriation of sublime force.

If what is indicated by sublimmity is less divine order, and more the presence of worldly trauma, the traumatic moment passes, as should be expected from the kathartic, invertive, dialectical process of the sublime, and infinite detail becomes the "infinite charm" of the photograph: it is inexhaustible, can be viewed, as a real landscape, ad infinitum, generating desire in its refusal of totalisation.[151] Thus, the premonition of the bad, blinding, feminine sublime is converted into a passive femininity amenable to

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[149] Wendell Holmes, 'Stereoscope', p. 75, p. 77.

[150] Ibid., p. 82.

[151] Ibid., pp. 77-78. See also Jonathon Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press (October Books), 2001. Densely filled stereoscopic images indicate the "bourgeois horror of the void", that is: infinite absence. But what is put in its place is infinite and untotalised details: if the "eyes never traverse the image in a full apprehension of the three-dimensionality of the entire field", then the failure of totalisation results in endless particularity. But if Crary argues that "there is a derangement of the conventional functioning of optical clues" (p. 125), which is connected to the 'liberation' from the "juridical model of the camera obscura" (p. 24), Holmes imposes paternal and economic order upon this endlessness, in a comparable way to that in which, I will argue, Talbot appears to attempt the imposition of photographic seeing into the domestic scene in a juridical sense, equating the legal archive, the domicile, the camera, and the camera obscura. Such a logic of surveillance is implicit in Crary's attachment to Foucault.

optical survey. Stereography's detail now gives access to "incidental truths" of life and death which goad the imagination by ratio of their contingency. The movement from the sublime to the charming, and the frightful to the interested, has a corollary shift from the contingent to the determined: the stereograph indicates the field of closure, delimitation, and totalisation in its legal identification of the subject – an indication of the forensic, rather than aesthetic, archive to come.[152] Holmes reiterates the dictates of nineteenth-century aesthetics (as for the eighteenth century), in which the femininity of particular details is only positive when incorporated into a structure of generalisation and idealisation.[153]

The shift from sublimity to charm, and endlessness to totality, might be read in two ways. Firstly, as an expression of a historical shift in which experiential habitude allows the shock of new technology to convert to the quotidian. Secondly, as an expression of the dynamic of the sublime, in its kathartic reversal. Holmes' effect is, in some ways, to replay the dynamic of the sublime as a gendered historical process. Given the historical resistance of the gestalt moment of the sublime to endless particularity, for example, in Reynolds, Kant, and Hegel, Holmes' affirmation of the sublimity immanent within endlessness appears closer to Burke's artificial infinite. If the endless is philosophically feminine, Holmes appropriates the femininity of infinite detail in order to produce a 'good' femininity'. Holmes represents less a return to the pre-Socratics than the masculine colonisation of their thought – which is relatively less patriarchal than the Socratic stance in affirmating archaic motherhood.[154]

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[152] Wendell Holmes, 'Stereoscope', p. 79, p. 78.
[153] See Schor, *Reading in Detail*, pp. 15-16.
[154] Where the earth is mother and nurse of the polis, see W.K.C Guthrie, *In the Beginning: Some Greek Views on the Origins of Life and the Early State of Man*, London: Methuen, 1957, pp. 23-4.

But for Holmes the generation of interest is also a product of lack of detail: where faces or bodies are blurred by movement, the formless takes its place with precision as that which causes desire to see and imagine. Lack of visibility draws the imagination into narrative invention, through the metonymy of details which open onto the universal: "wherever man lives with any of the decency of civilisation, you will find the *clothes-line*."[155] The universality of the image is thus based in an image of the universality of culture, which precisely obscures the cultural specificity of feminine labour. What Holmes' imagination recreates is an image of the paternal domicile: "it brings the people who sleep under that roof before us to see their sheets drying on that fence; and how real it makes the men in that house to look at their shirts". If detail allows imaginative penetration of the domicile, and the reconstruction of the paternal figure in its physical reality, lack of detail allows the penetrative reconstruction of the feminine psyché:

> the longings, passions, experiences, possibilities of womanhood menate that gliding shadow which has flitted through our consciousness, nameless, dateless, featureless [...].[156]

The detail, in its aestheticised, photographic form, becomes the passive substrate for universalising penetrations at the expense of individual, cultural or historical particularity – the aesthetic detail is employed against actual detail. This form, universalised to the point of empty abstraction, contrasts the realistic reconstruction of the masculine body. To the extent that the stereoscope was an object of bourgeois, domestic, and private viewing, Holmes' description reflects back on the domestic site of

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[155] Wendell Holmes, 'Stereoscope', p. 80.
[156] Ibid., p. 79.

use, providing a philosophised expression of part of the social use of the stereoscope – as an object of voyeuristic and pornographic leisure.[157]

Note 2 – The Defence of Plasticity: Infinite Detail as a Mode of the Bad Sublime.

Where Holmes represents the domestication of infinite detail, a more problematic reception is registered in Rosalind Krauss's analysis of Nadar's *My Life as a Photographer* (1900). Balzac, influenced by Lavater, propounded a concept of the trace determining an identity between inside and outside, psychology and physiognomy, character and clothes, in which this latter pair "was meant to carry the authority of Science".[158] Balzac's sense of the congruity between literary expression and the inner man registers Lavater's sense of interior and exterior congruity where it extends to the relation between individual and environment: each modifies the other.

> It is on this basis that one can gauge the character of a man by his dress, his house, his furniture. Set within this vast universe, man contrives a smaller, separate world which he fortifies, entrenches, and arranges in his own fashion and in which we discover his images.[159]

Within this congruity is embedded a concept of the domestic in which the masculine domicile is, in Krauss's citation of Eric Auerbach's reading of Balzac, inhabited by a feminine figure which threatens to disrupt fortification from the inside.

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[157] See Rosalind Krauss, 'Photography's Discursive Spaces' (1982), in Richard Bolton (ed.), *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992.
[158] Rosalind Krauss, 'Tracing Nadar' (1978), in Heron and Williams, *Illuminations*, p. 41. The roots of this thought would stretch into classical thought via Montaigne's 'On Physiognomy'.
[159] Krauss, 'Tracing Nadar', p. 42.

> For behind the details of dress and bearing through which Balzac renders the *petit-bourgeois* avarice and cunning of Père Goriot's landlady, there gather a set of images [....] that create 'the impression of something repulsively spectral.' [....] 'What confronts us, then, is the unity of a particular milieu, felt as a total concept of a demonic-organic nature and presented entirely by suggestive and sensory means.'[160]

In Balzac's version of the exuviae, photographic appropriation depletes their infinity, depriving man of the "essence of life" (Nadar).[161] Thus, photography is an agent of emasculation and disruption of the paternal domicile. If it is the depletion of the skins which destroys essence, they represent a positive valorisation of the ad infinitum – but only to the extent that within them the totality of essence is immanent. This association of the photographic and the feminine in terms of the sublime is a component of Trachtenberg's thoughts on the ambivalence of the Daguerreotype as a material object, flickering between likeness, portraiture and craft on the one hand, and identity, mirroring and life on the other.[162] The latter group of terms is a product of infinite detail. The very ambivalence of the Daguerreotype, between the representation of external features and the presence of the interior self, within the context of the emerging ideology of individualism, is a form of the problematic of the recess. The troubling presence of the identity rather than the copy of the sitter renders the experience of the plate "unruly and unregulated" rather than objective and determinate – effectively feminine rather than masculine. It is registered in an account of 1855 through the figure of femininity as a hidden source of arcane, sublime power.

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[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., p. 39.
[162] Alan Trachtenberg, 'Likeness as Identity: Reflections on the Daguerrean Mystique', in Graham Clarke (ed.), *The Portrait in Photography*, London: Reaktion Books, 1992, p. 187.

> No enchantress' wand could be more potent to bring back the loved ones we once cherished than could those faithful resemblances wrought out by this almost magic art of Daguerre [...].

Trachtenberg glosses that "this modern avatar of the enchantress, the ancient mother figure, is potent to 'bring back', virtually delivered as a new birth, figures from the past or indeed death."[163] In this way, the Daguerrean image represents the supercession of a mode of mechanical reproduction, but not of the metaphorics of reproduction. But, rather than a synthesis of the natural-feminine and the technological-masculine couples, what this indicates is an ambivalence toward feminine power in the masculine rhetorical combination of technology and nature in photographic discourse – the recurrence of the bad sublime which signals an ambivalent relation to infinite detail.

Specific instances of the resistance to the Daguerreotype precisely cast infinite detail as an avatar of the ad infinitum. This resistance, which marks an opposition between the Daguerreotype and the Calotype, reiterates a series of fundamental philosophical divisions, of which the infinites are part. With something of an ironic metaphysical extension of Arago's relentless technicism, Hill compares Talbot's process and Daguerre's in 1848:

> The rough surface, and unequal texture throughout the paper is the main cause of the Calotype failing in details, before the process of Daguerreotypy – and this is the very life of it. They look like the imperfect work of a man – and not the much diminished perfect work of a God.[164]

Calotypists by design, Hill and Adamson gave positive valorisation to its softer form, employing theatrical posing and lighting in extension of picturesque painterly

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[163] Ibid., pp. 185-6.
[164] David Octavius Hill, Letter to Mr. Bicknell, 17th January 1848, in Newhall, *The History of Photography*, p. 48.

tradition.[165] Prosaic, tied to the feminine traits of particularity and empiricity, and thus divorced from the aesthetic, the Daguerreotype is deathly – divorced from the expressive, the universal, the masculine. This resistance to the 'distraction' of the Daguerreotype's "itemising detail" surfaces in a number of historical accounts, for example: in Ruskin's resistance to the Daguerreotype's "lifeless", "mathematic" "precision", and in Le Gray's advocacy of the sacrifice of detail toward expressive ends.[166] The detail of the Daguerreotype is seen as that which intercedes between man and a relation to the divine via plastic expression.

A comparable position is articulated by Francis Wey in 1851, where the effectivity of the calotype is in "animating" the image with "expression" through its retraction from accuracy. Richard Shiff locates the connotations of animation in Kleist's concept of *anima* – that which motivates the body.

> To represent 'feeling' a medium had to accomodate a 'soul'. It seems that souls communicated best with other souls, and that a medium either devoid of soul or insensitive to it might interfere with the process. Prevailing opinion was that sentient being posessed souls, but matter and machines did not.[167]

Here, the relation between ad infinitum and absolute is not immanent. Detail is too replete for the soul to reside in the image, which presents an empty container or recess: the empty camera, the empty body, which would displace and defer the soul. Its space is made through diffusion, the obliteration of the ad infinitum of detail and thus also the infinite complexity of nature. Manual finitude becomes the site of immanence of the theological infinite.

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[165] Marien, *Photography*, pp. 71-2.
[166] Ibid., p. 57, p. 71, pp. 76-77.
[167] Richard Shiff, 'Photographic Soul', in Green, *Where is the Photograph ?*, p. 104.

Concluding Note – Toward Talbot.

The Daguerreotype's strong relation to infinite detail allows a positive relation to the natural-scientific archive; through nature's tautology, the plate stands as a technological fossil. If the atelier is a domestic recess, the site of the origin of Daguerreotypy's birth, its own image of itself visualises a complex and unresolved set of reproductive differences; perhaps even a recess which is not open to appropriation, which could be read to concern the issue of opacity and the failure of multiple reproduction. The shift in perspective from science to aesthetics indicated by Hill and Adamson indicates that the totalising, determinate power of infinite detail may readily be interpreted as the endless displacement of another form of the absolute. In their affirmation of the Calotype, Talbot's process is opposite, lacking in detail: the transparent negatives allow access to proliferation of a kind which is exponential in comparison.

From the side of the theological, the historical reception of the difference between the Daguerreotype and the Calotype is an opposition between the particular and the general, the empirical and the universal, the contingent and the necessary – a cultural expression of resistance to nature in its contingency, a resistance to the ad infinitum, and an affirmation of the access to the universal via the impression. In this sense, the impression is brought into service of metaphysical totality, the infinity of the absolute, against an ad infinitum which would recess it through endless deferral. The position of Hill is historically preceded by Talbot's affirmation of the plasticity of negative-positive photographics, yet Talbot's discourse indicates that the attempted containment of the ad infinitum of detail is troubled by other versions of this form.

CHAPTER 2 –
Photographics at the Threshold: the Femininity of Endless Proliferation in the Domestic Milieu of Talbot.

Introductory Note – The Feminine and the Domestic Origin of Talbot's Practice.

The bicentenary of Talbot's birth (1800-1877) was marked by an exhibition entitled *Specimens and Marvels*.[1] The publication which followed marks a gendered interpretation of the archival status of Talbot's work. In the catalogue, Roberts emphasises the relevance of eighteenth century alchemical metaphors for Talbot's thought, and the heterogeneity of Talbot's practice – for which boundaries between the arts and the sciences are fluid.[2] Against this fluidity, the dispersed collections of Talbot's works were divided into the aesthetic and scientific by the judgement of the Science Museum in 1934. Its consignation and taxonomy is contrasted to Matilda Talbot's prior and impromptu exhibition at Lacock in 1934 (fig.13).

Fig.13: Alexander Barclay, *Interior of Lacock Abbey* (c.1934), gelatin silver print.

[1] Curated by Russel Roberts at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, Bradford, England 2000.

[2] Russell Roberts, 'Specimens and Marvels: The Work of William Henry Fox Talbot', in *Specimens and Marvels: William Henry Fox Talbot and the Invention of Photography*, New York: Aperture, 2000, p. 5.

This, Roberts argues, conveyed the eccentric qualities of the overall collection, and recognised the complex meanings of the images – at once aesthetic, scientific, commercial and archival.[3] Roberts' sense is dual: the images transgress current divisions, but *The Pencil of Nature* (1844-46) also represents an attempt to provide a taxonomy for the functions of the photographic. Roberts marks the way in which the relation between the installation shots of the exhibition of prints (which reference the domestic interior) and the domestic interior itself is contingent. The installation shots "fortuitously" capture reflections of the interior, like the contingent details of the photographic image emphasised by Talbot in *The Pencil of Nature*.[4] There is an attempt to return the viewer's sense of the images to the domestic setting of their production, their place of origin (arché), where there is a connection between photography and a mode of contingent display connected to a feminine figure. There is no sense in which this is an explicit defence of the femininity of Talbot's practice, yet it is clear that Roberts presents a mediation of two notions of archive, two forms of taxonomy, and two forms of display: the institutional and the domestic, in which the latter, marked by contingency and experimentality, is original.[5] This chapter will argue that the relation between Talbot's practices and the domestic scene is deeply problematic – not simply the sign of domesticity, nor of a synthesis of feminine and masculine traits.

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[3] Roberts, 'Specimens', p. 6. Analysis of Talbot's oeuvre is to some extent subject to this consignatory scientific ideology: the Science Museum maintains a large number of uncatalogued specimens, so that the exhibition catalogues mentioned above have few examples of, for example, photo-micrography.

[4] Roberts, 'Specimens', p. 6. Likewise, Batchen affirms that the future thought of photography is lodged in its contingency: "It frequently happens, moreover [...] that the operator himself discovers on examination, perhaps long afterwards, that he has depicted many things he had no notion of at the time" (Talbot). Geoffrey Batchen, 'A Philosophical Window', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 2002, p. 108.

[5] In Lacanian terms, a gender dimension to this opposition is implicit in its reiteration of the opposition between the Symbolic and the Imaginary, and the regression toward the latter.

Variation in the use of the term 'domestic' in its historical sense in Talbot's writings and correspondence should be noted here: it is used to refer to the immediate and extended family circle, to the milieu of Lacock, to domestic servants, and to the national as opposed to the foreign – particularly in regard of the tensions between British and French photographic processes and patents, for which the domestic is a domain of legal ownership. If the foreign is partly defined by its maintenance of secrets concerning photographic processes and discoveries, I will argue that the scene of Lacock is itself characterised by secrecy and darkness which counters and problematises the *heimlich* quality of the domestic. Since the fluid interconnectedness of aesthetics, natural philosophy, and commerce is a historically specific instantiation of reason, a strange paternal logic, it marks the sign of the attempted encroachment upon a darkness which is coded feminine. What allows an understanding of the relation of photography to the domestic and feminine is the recognition of the ways in which this practice reiterates and transforms the figure of the feminine recess attached to the archival ad infinitum. In order to argue this, it is first necessary to turn to Talbot's conception of the relations between the infinites, the finite, and the absolute.

§ 1 – Relations between Photographic Technology and Cultural Thought.

Note 1 – Lake Como: Penetrating the Secrets of Feminine Nature and the Chiasmus of Infinites.

The use of the term 'infinite' and its cognates in Talbot's practice is superficially split along two lines. Firstly, in hyperbole, particularly in private, domestic, and official correspondence – where there is 'infinite gratitude' or 'infinite charm'. Secondly, a nominally more technical usage in discussions of chemistry – "infinitely thin layers or

strata of iodide of silver".[6] Krauss provides an extended analysis of the way in which the trace, the direct impression of the photographic image, historically exists between science and spiritualism via Swedenborg's sense that the infinite division of light means that it exists in both the phenomenal and noumenal worlds.[7] In this sense, the ad infinitum of subdivision is controlled by the absolute. The sexually reproductive version of this structure of containment (emboîtement) in the milieu of Newton and Malebranche is indicated by Brian Elsea: "God had created all forms of life that would ever exist, the ova of each female containing minutely small but perfectly formed offspring, whose ova in the case of females contained even smaller but still perfectly formed beings and so on".[8] The transference of philosophical discourses of the infinite into the terrain of the photographic involves not only the 'shading off' between light as corpuscular and divine through Swedenborg, but the shading off between the philosophical discourse of the infinites and the photographic discourse of infinite detail.

The rhetorical and technical uses of the term infinite could be considered to take place in different environs – scientific and social institutions. While masculinity would be able to utilise both, the feminine would tend to be restricted to the rhetorical, domestic form. As in the texts associated to the Daguerreotype, photography appears as a technique by which the difference between the technical and rhetorical uses of 'infinite' becomes problematic, and transgressive – there is a 'shading off' between them. Reference to infinite detail in a Photogenic Drawing or Calotype would verge on

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[6] Somewhat like the way that Arago mentions the "incalculable" thinness of the Daguerreotype's surface. William Henry Fox Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch of the Invention of the Art' (1844), in Mike Weaver (ed.), *Henry Fox Talbot: Selected Texts and Bibliography*, Oxford: Clio Press, 1992, p. 82.

[7] Rosalind Krauss, 'Tracing Nadar' (1978), in Liz Heron and Val Williams, *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the Late 1850s to the Present*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1996, p. 44.

[8] Brian Elsea, *Fathering the Unthinkable: Masculinity, Scientists and the Nuclear Arms Race*, London: Pluto Press, 1983, p. 25.

the rhetorical and hyperbolic, in comparison to the Daguerreotype, yet has a technical valence in comparison to manual reproduction, and a metaphysical resonance in terms of the infinite complexity of nature. In another sense, Talbot's comment that the "Amphitype process bears an infinitely, greater resemblance to the Daguerreotype than it does to the pictures produced on paper", indicates a point at which the hyperbolic form encroaches upon the legal, national, and technical relations between different photographic processes.[9] The term infinite is thus witness not only to a multiplicity of functions, but also to a certain amount of slippage – a mark of the fate of the concept. Such slippage is a significant feature of Talbot's description of the origins of his processes, where the chiasmic relation between infinite detail and infinite proliferation verges on an endlessness which is associated to the feminine.

The origin of the desire for photography in the "melancholy" of Talbot's attempts to draw with a camera obscura in 1823 and 1824, and camera lucida at Lake Como in 1833, is cited by Talbot in the retrospective essay 'A Brief Historical Sketch of the Invention of the Art' (1844).[10] Here, the "faithless" pencil contrasts the "fidelity" of photographic reproduction.[11] In this rhetoric of familial relations, Talbot claims mastery over nature: a gendered rhetoric attempts to establish paternity over the birth of photographic processes. The description of Lake Como is generally understood as a temporally complex description, riddled with a range of discourses and cultural

[9] Fox Talbot to the periodical *Athenaenum* (03.01.1852), *The Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot*, Larry Schaaf, (Project Director), University of Glasgow, Document No. 06547; http://www.foxtalbot.arts.gla.uk – accessed 26.03.2004 *passim*.
[10] Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch', pp. 76-84.
[11] Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch', p. 76; William Henry Fox Talbot, 'Early Researches in Photography' (1877), in Weaver, *Selected Texts*, p. 48.

experiences, rather than the expression of a singular event.[12] In its mythification, its philosophically and temporally complex, retroactive and prognostic drives, the description equates to the photographic moment of exposure.[13] As Derrida remarks, the very sublimity of the photograph is the impossible non-art moment of pure registration, an "immediately archived perception", which is subject to differentiation:

> if the 'one single time' [...] already includes a heterogenous time, this presupposes a duration that postpones and differentiates [....] and within that time subevents can form, differentiations, micrological modifications [...] that make a definitive break with the presupposed phenomenological naturalism which saw in photography the miracle of a technology that obliterates itself so as to give us natural purity [*virginité*] [...].[14]

The tension between the immediately archived and the self-differentiated is, as Derrida indicates, an issue of gender. The erasure of the difference of the moment is precisely Talbot's claim to Herschel: "[t]he present weather is the finest and most settled, since the birth of Photography [... .] it is as if nature supplied an infinite designing power".[15] Photography appears as a partly autogenic activity on the part of nature: "[y]ou make the powers of nature work for you [...]. There is something in this rapidity and perfection of execution, which is very wonderful."[16]

As this indicates, the desire for photography partly emerges from two points concerning the failure of a manual reproduction. Firstly, the failure to reproduce the

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[12] For example: Mike Gray, 'Towards Photography', in *Huellas de Luz: El Arte y los Experimentos de William Henry Fox Talbot*, Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía / Aldeasa, 2000; Steve Edwards, 'The Dialectics of Skill in Talbot's Dream World', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 2002, p. 113.

[13] See Fox Talbot to the periodical *Athenaenum* (03.01.1852), *Correspondence*, Document No. 06547.

[14] Jacques Derrida, 'The Photograph as Copy, Archive and Signature' (1993), in David Campany (ed.), *Art and Photography*, London: Phaidon Press, p. 220.

[15] Fox Talbot to John Herschel (30.04.1840), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04070.

[16] Talbot, cited in Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997, p. 62.

"minutae of nature in their innumerable details".[17] Secondly, given its temporal labour, the finitude of manual reproduction in relation to the rapid fading of the "creations of a moment" cast upon the paper by the camera's lens.[18] Since detail is historically coded feminine, such failure signals the emasculation of comprehension. The concept of the relation between time and image appears in a fragmentary, obviated draft.

> I never heard that Epicurius professed thought had any hopes of catching one of these images as it flew & preserving it safely in his album or portfolio, a thing which would have established his position in ye opinion of his contemporaries beyond all controversy. [....] Many notions of ye present days are destined to sink into oblivion & perhaps some of the oldest notions will come up again. [19]

Talbot's reference to Vico indicates a dual movement of advance and a return. Hence, Talbot's desire is not only concerned with enlisting nature and technology against manual finitude. It is to enlist, through a philosophy and a philosophy of history, one type of infinity against another – infinite detail against infinite complexity, photographic permanence against temporal transience. Photography selects from the temporal ad infinitum, producing a singular and determinate quantum, and by fixing it produces a relation to the eternal moment – an avatar of the temporal omnipresence of the divine. In doing so, photography's relation to the ancients constructs an alternate model of temporality from that of endless linear succession – an extension that effects a circular resolution, a figure of totality.

The photograph's maintenance of the fleeting moment connects it to eternity, not its reduplication. The possibility of an ad infinitum of positive prints emerges from the

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[17] Talbot, 'Early Researches', p. 48-9.

[18] Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch', p. 77.

[19] Cited in Gray, 'Towards Photography', p. 350. However, Talbot did not subscribe to the Eidolon theory, but to Newtonian physics. See Douglas Nickel, 'Talbot's Natural Magic', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 2002, p. 136.

initial exposure's unfortunate reversal of tone, rather than from an explicit desire to make multiple copies.[20] Self-consciously, Talbot emphasises that whatever paths were taken through the labyrinth of scientific exploration, the "first and original idea" was simply to maintain an image of light and shade through the use of the camera, paper, and silver nitrate.[21] The repetition of the negative image is in the service of the eternal moment, but its technical process produces an ad infinitum. Photography reverses the relation of immanence posited by Hegel – that by which the absolute totalises the ad infinitum.

If photography produces endlessness, it origin also lies in a proliferation of copies that has historically been coded ad infinitum. This cultural-economic origin is indicated by Talbot's 1820's grand tour, after which, and through photography, he "did not expect to revolutionise ways of seeing so much as to satisfy contemporary taste in antiquarian and picturesque subjects by a more efficient process".[22] What lies behind Talbot's hapless sketching is the culture of the copy and its collection – the very ad infinitum denigrated by Hegel.[23] Hence, the stilling of the moment is less of a primary drive and more of a necessity for the ability to proliferate prints. Negative permanence, Talbot reflected in 1841, is necessary for the proliferation.[24] In this sense, permanence is

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[20] Talbot, 'Photogenic Drawings Exhibited in 1839' (1839), in Weaver, *Selected Texts*, p. 58, and n. 1.
[21] Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch', p. 78.
[22] Mike Weaver, 'Diogenes with a Camera', in Weaver, *Selected Texts*, pp. 1-2.
[23] Something of the condition of this milieu is indicated by Maria Hambourg: the ensuing photographic extension of the culture of the grand tour owed less to imperialistic and commercial design and more to a romantic desire to "appropriate the foreign and exotic as antidotes to [...] highly civilised lives", to visit "a visionary recess away from familiar Europe", and ultimately to bring such otherness "into a common patrimony". Although this separation of the aesthetic from the political and commercial is suspect, the grand tours are, in this sense, the geo-cultural expression of the construction and penetration of the recess. See Maria Morris Hambourg, 'Extending the Grand Tour' (1993), in Liz Heron and Val Williams, *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the late 1850s to the Present*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1996, p. 33, p. 37.
[24] Fox Talbot to Jerdan William (05.02.1841), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04191.

at once tied to the eternal and the ad infinitum. Proliferation is thus also primary drive, which entails something of a paradox: to have that which has no end. As a historical commentator remarked, proliferation would annihilate the endlessness of desire: "[p]hotography will only be truly perfect when it is possible to multiply infinitely by impression the magnificent results of the camera obscura. There will be nothing left to wish for."[25]

Both senses, of the ad infinitum as by-product and of the eternal as detour, are possible within the complex mesh of Talbot's thought. Their interrelation indicates that the relation between the infinites is chiasmic. Since the purity of each pole always slides into its other, discourse takes place somewhere between the two, just as descriptions of infinite detail and infinite proliferation occur somewhere between rhetorical and technical usage. The trope of the chiasmus, while unacknowledged in any self-conscious manner, will be seen to operate in other forms, throughout Talbot's practice.

Note 2 – The Singular of Paternal Arché and Feminine Multiplicity: the Femininity of the Lapsarian.

Talbot wrote that his experiments were to "explore a path so deeply hidden among nature's secrets" – an encounter with a chaotic field of infinite complexity whose totalisation has been beyond the limitations of knowledge.[26] Here, in 1840, Talbot asked

> after all, what is Nature, but one great field of wonders past our comprehension ? Those, indeed, which are of everyday occurrence, do not habitually strike us, on account of their familiarity, but they are not the less on that account essential portions of the same wonderful Whole.[27]

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[25] Antoine François Jean Claudet to Fox Talbot (16.05.1853), *Correspondence*, Document No. 06788.
[26] Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch', p. 78.
[27] Talbot, cited in Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, p. 62.

Initial difficulties in establishing light sensitive chemicals and protracted problems in establishing permanent images encountered a "labyrinth of facts" for which the totalising "clue" was wanting.[28] In this metaphorics of deferral, the unreachable totality of nature presents an ad infinitum to knowledge which recesses synthesis. This recessing might be circumvented through the determinations of scientific experiment: Baconian induction is employed toward universal laws by "noticing the occurrence of unusual circumstances (which accident perhaps first manifests in some small degree)".[29] That is: the universal and necessary are located through the mastery of the contingent and particular.[30] The secondarity of this feminine nature is only endorsed where Talbot refers to "her laws" – they are not her own: in a scribble plundering romanticism's heritage by quoting Pope's 'Essay on Man' (1732), Talbot notes "Look through Nature to Nature's God".[31] The infinity of nature is secondary to the absolute; so too then, in Talbot's thoughts on the originary dualism of pagan deity, the feminine earth secondary to the paternal sun.[32]

In this drive through contingency toward the absolute, etymology is a light that probes the obscurity of the past, rendering it transparent. In its facilitation of textual copies, their distribution, consignation and taxonomic order, photography appears to offer the possibility of an alternate construction to the contingency of the domicile – perspicacity and neutralised objectivism indicate towards totalisation.

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[28] Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch', p. 82.
[29] Cited in Nickel, 'Talbot's Natural Magic', p. 133.
[30] On the shift from the classical figure of veiled Isis through the scientific revelation of nature's secrets, and its specifically masculine rhetoric of penetration, appropriation and occupation through Bacon, Descartes, Newton, and Davy – Talbot's precursors – see Elsea, *Fathering the Unthinkable*, pp. 19-28. Here, the transformation of nature to the mechanical and passive is a necessary revalorisation caused by the incestuous implications of penetrating the maternal.
[31] Cited in Nickel, 'Talbot's Natural Magic', p. 138.
[32] Ibid.

> Etymology is the history of the languages of nations [...] it explains their manners and customs [...]. It is the lamp by which much that is obscure in the primitive history of the world will one day be cleared up. At present much that passes for early history is mere vague speculation: but in order to build a durable edifice upon a firm foundation, materials must be carefully brought together from all quarters and submitted to the impartial and intelligent judgement of those who are engaged in similar enquiries.[33]

The keystone sought for this epistemological edifice, sought through the "tortuous labyrinth" of language, is an arché, a pre-lapsarian transparency of communication – "the hypothesis of the original unity of mankind and of a common original of all languages of the globe".[34] Etymology is thus directed toward the singular origin, against that which is self-differential. The darkness is not only the unknown and obscure, but the heterogeneity of linguistic differences which occlude the singularity of divine origin. An implication of the gender-political dimension of this arché is provided by Talbot's 'The Antiquity of the Book of Genesis' (1839). This text equates the sun with the father, and the earth with the mother, gendering the light which discursively illuminates meaning and literally illuminates the objects within Talbot's images. It also indicates Hesiod's version of Pandora's box as a 'later' version of Eve's original sin.[35]

> The very ancient and beautiful fable of Pandora [...] is the story of the woman, the wife of the first-created man, upon whom the gods had showered every blessing which it is possible to imagine; but had laid upon her one injunction, had hid from her one secret which she was never to attempt to discover. But, alas! Her curiosity tempts her to violate this fatal command! Immediately all happiness flies away from earth; and in its place sorrow, misery, and all manner of evils invade the abode [...]. [36]

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[33] Talbot, 'English Etymologies' (1847), cited in Roberts, 'Specimens and Marvels', p. 60.
[34] Talbot, 'English Etymologies' (1847), cited in Weaver, *Selected Texts*, p. 17.
[35] Talbot, 'The Antiquity of the Book of Genesis' (1839), abridged in Weaver, *Selected Texts*, p. 43-44.
[36] Ibid., p. 44.

Since Eve's sin precedes the multiplication of tongues, both myths are precisely manifestations of the displacement of a pure state, the latter through a proliferative opening of differences. Significantly, Pandora's transgression of paternal law is here the opening of the "complex domicile", the force which disrupts the pastoral unity of the paternal house.[37] If the paternal domicile is characterised by the cyclicality of birth, life, and death of figures of paternal authority, Pandora's transgression threatens that circularity with a linear and unending displacement. In this sense, there is a connection between feminine figures and a multiplicity of differences that defer and displace the origin, ad infinitum. Working within the domicile of lapsarian language, Talbot's drive is to totalise such differences through the light of reason.

A mythical dimension to photography's role in this drive is argued by Gray, where Talbot's etymological combing for terminology for the process indicates knowledge of Orphic lore. Deriving 'photography' from 'Phaëtheon Protogenus' (Phanes) indicates the story in which "black-winged night was courted by the wind and laid an egg in the womb of darkness [...] Eros, whom some call Phanes was hatched from this egg and set the universe in motion".[38] Eros is, in Bacon's 1609 '*Cupid* Or the Atom' (in *The Wisdom of the Ancients*), the creator of the "minute", "primary seeds" or particles of matter from a Chaos which "is never distinguished by the ancients with divine honour or the name of a god". Such particles, like "individuals, which lie at the base of nature, are infinite in number; these are collected into Species [...] into Genera

[37] See Jean-François Lyotard, '*Domus* and the Megalopolis' (1987), *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (1988), trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, London: Polity Press, 1991.
[38] Gray, 'Towards Photography', in *Huellas de Luz*, p. 350.

[...] so that at last nature seems to end as it were in unity".[39] The photographic is in this way attached to the arché of matter, the limit of infinite division, and to the containment of particulars. The penetrative, inseminatory, luminous metaphorics of this "silver egg embedded within the womb of darkness" will be played out not only at an epistemological and discursive level, but also at a level of photographic process and at a level of visual rhetoric.

Talbot's Photogenic Drawing facsimiles of writing offer the possibility of assisting the discursive labour of etymology in a determinedly archival sense. Photographic reproduction offers a mediated and contained proliferation of copies in the service of epistemological totality. If the experiments for this process occur within the domestic scene, they are directed at the specific archive of the kind represented by the British Museum. Technically, transparency is what allows both the facsimile's contact-print process and the negative-positive process. What allows light to pass through thus has a positive relation to the optics of reason. This relation to transparency evidently functions within the objects that are photographed by Talbot – glass windows, glass articles. Nevertheless, transparency is not simply valorised over opacity: the white skin of plaster reproductions facilitates photographic aesthetics as much as glass ornaments.

Note 3 – The Emasculation of Detail and Archival Permanence.

Significantly, given the denigrations of the ad infinitum in the history of philosophy, the potential proliferation of prints is not valorised as a dangerous extension by Talbot. The proliferation of prints, although taking part in the ad infinitum of capital

[39] Abridged in John Hollander and Frank Kermode, *The Literature of Renaissance England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1973, pp. 953-4.

circulation, is directed toward economic and epistemological accumulation toward synthesis. Both aspects, however, depend upon the relative permanence of the photographic print, as does the maintenance of detail. Since this technical issue was problematic for Talbot, it will be seen to have economic and epistemological ramifications, specifically in terms of the gendering of Talbot's practice.

On the side of the Daguerreotype, the durability of image is located in a singular, material and opaque object. On the side of the Calotype, the durability of the moment is located in a negative which is transparent and repeatable. Talbot recognised the superiority of the Daguerreotype "in some respects" – implicitly in terms of detail. Such was certainly the historical reception of photogenic drawing.[40] The superiority of his own processes was asserted in terms of "multiplication of copies" and hence "publishing".[41] Images produced by this exploration were, in 1834, able to mark outlines, "but the details of the architecture were feeble".[42] Indeed, even Talbot's own associates were using the sharper, faster Collodion process by 1852, if not earlier.[43] As a consequence of this lack, this technical failure to accede to precision, Talbot's practice is marked, to some extent, by a shift from the discourse of infinite detail to a visual rhetoric of allegorical aesthetic references.[44]

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[40] David Brewster to Fox Talbot (18.10.1840), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04147.
[41] Fox Talbot to John Herschel (07.12.1839), *Correspondence*, Document No. 03987.
[42] Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch', p. 80.
[43] R. Derek Wood to Anne Hammond, (14.10.1997, 28.10.1997), 'Letters of R. Derek Wood', 1990's Pt. III; http://midleykent.fsnet.co.uk/Letters/LETTERS9.HTM – accessed 08.04.2002.
[44] In 'Tracing Nadar', Krauss refers to *The Haystack* (1844) as "visual proof of Talbot's contention that the mechanical image can suspend an infinitude of detail in a single visual plenum, where natural vision tends to summarize or simplify in terms of mass" (p. 45). Such a description is a rough approximation to the accompanying text to the image in *The Pencil of Nature*, but the allegorical turn of such images precisely indicates a retraction from the discourse of infinite detail. Indeed, even the historical reception of the image found its definition wanting – "the foliage, however, is very indistinctly made out". See Weaver, *Selected Texts*, p. 109.

Nevertheless, Photogenic Drawing and Calotypy were presented for the production of precise textual facsimiles, and the Photoglyphic engraving process was thought sharp enough for accurate reproductions of cuneiform and hieroglyphic texts. Generally speaking, Talbot's relation to infinite detail would be necessarily ambivalent considering the evidential precision of the Daguerreotype.[45]

Talbot's struggle with permanent detail is registered in the ur-image *Latticed Window (with the Camera Obscura)* of August 1835.[46] This ensemble of text and image is clearly retroactive, mnemonic and documentary, referring to the archival status of the photograph. Its context is the legal dimensions of its paternal claim to the dates, processes, and proofs of invention. Talbot's note indicates the entropy of the process at this point, the decay of the badly fixed image. Hence, it had been possible to count the number of lattice panes, but this determinate, finite quanta is not visually accessible: the

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[45] In 1835, Talbot yearned for greater definition, although his processes never attained the sharpness of the Daguerreotype. See Mike Ware, 'Inventions in Camera: The Technical Achievements of WHF Talbot', in *Huellas de Luz*, p. 345. See also Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth-Century Photography*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998, particularly pp. 16-24, p. 26, pp. 30-31. Smith's analysis sets up an opposition between absolute perspicacity and variable defocus. In terms of this thesis, absolute focus is a mark of infinite detail. In its etymological derivation from 'hearth', 'focus' stands for the paternal attempt to regulate the domestic scene, and in which Talbot's variable focus "functioned in relation to and thereby ratified an unwritten consensus upon an absolute state" (p. 17). Deviation from this absolute is associated with the feminine: "[i]n subverting photography's authoritative self-defining law of absolute focus Cameron effectively denies the phallocentrism of geometrical perspective and rewrites the contingency of depth as her subject"; which hence "denies the fetish" which masks the male castration complex (pp. 30-32). Cameron is differentiated from the historically specific and later aestheticisation of 'soft' focus, although it is not entirely clear how (p. 25), given that Talbot's allegorical photographs mark an equatable aestheticisation. Since Talbot's practice is marked by deviations from infinite detail and negotiations by which such failures may be brought within the paternal regulation of the domicile, the association of variable focus with femininity and contingency is problematic – the very recuperability of such strategies will be indicated by the pictorialist appropriation of unsharp 'atmosphere' (Stieglitz) in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In general, Talbot's practice is less a politics of the hearth, and more a politics of the threshold, a liminal space between interiority and exteriority in domestic, epistemological, and optical terms. In Cameron's work, a formal analysis might approach the way there is a boundary or threshold between the interiority and retraction of that which is unfocussed, and the presentation of that which is focussed. But in this, the 'contingency of depth' would have to be questioned qua contingency in that it represents the determinations of expressive individualism.

[46] The full inscription reads: "Latticed Window / (with the Camera Obscura) / August 1835 / When first made, the squares / of glass about 200 in number / could be counted, with the help / of a lens."

image has slipped back into indeterminacy. Here again, there is a relation between one avatar of infinity and another: the failure of the mediate form of the eternal, photographic permanence, emasculates the relation to the mediate form of natural complexity, infinite detail. Without permanent detail, what remains is an impression of the domestic environment, an impression of rational (and architectural) order, an impression of reproduction – an archival impression (fig.14).

Fig.14: Talbot, *Latticed Window (with the Camera Obscura)* (1835), Photogenic Drawing negative, 6.9 x 14.9 cm (mount), 3.6 x 2.8 cm (image).

Some successes in fixing the image had been met circa 1838, but the permanence of the image remained problematic: "the clue was still wanting to this labyrinth of facts."[47] Even by the time of the publication of the first sections of *The Pencil of Nature* in 1844, the long-term fixity of the Calotype had not been achieved. Publication was halted in 1846. If archival permanence for a strictly photographic process appeared to Talbot as an ad infinitum of labyrinthine experiment, it was to remain so – the solution

[47] Talbot, 'A Brief Historical Sketch', p. 82.

for the durable fix was abandoned, and succeeded by Evrard.[48] Talbot's failure to provide a chemical means for archival permanence resulted in an exit from more purely photographic processes and a turn to photomechanical copies – the photographing, engraving and printing process of the photoglyph.[49] Archival permanence is thus dependent upon a printed, textual technique, so that photography and writing are enmeshed in various forms throughout Talbot's practice. If Talbot, in 1839, expressed his position as being on the "threshold" of future possibilities, the failure to achieve purely photographic archival permanence would remain in this transitional state.[50] Moreover, the photoglyphic process itself represents a threshold between the photographic and mechanographic.

§ 2 – Photographics and Femininity.

Note 1 – The Archival Regulation of the Feminine through Photographic Composition and the Difference of Genders.

Batchen's 'Patterns of Lace' (2000) goes some way to account for the "distinctly feminine presence" in Talbot's early images of lace and the use of gauze in the photomechanical engraving process patented in 1852.[51] Batchen analyses a Photogenic Drawing of lace whose pattern had been traced to a Jacquard-automated machine (fig.15). The two meshes were machine-made, sewn together, and the embroidery manually finished by women or girls: the image of organic, preindustrial, traditional labour is simulacral. Batchen's attention to the relation between object and print as a

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[48] See Nancy Keeler, 'Inventors and Entrepreneurs', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 2002.
[49] Larry Schaaf, '"A Wonderful Illustration of Modern Necromancy": Significant Talbot Experimental Prints in the J. Paul Getty Museum', *Photography: Discovery and Invention*, (catalogue of symposium 1989), Malibu, California: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1990, p. 43.
[50] Fox Talbot to John Herschel (07.12.1839), *Correspondence*, Document No. 03987.
[51] Geoffrey Batchen, 'Patterns of Lace', in *Huellas de Luz*, p. 355.

problematic of 'truth to presence' could open a discussion of the resonances of 'impression' in *Archive Fever* – both a diffusion and the moment of inculcation upon the substrate, the impossible precision of the moment of archivisation.

Fig.15: Talbot, *Lace* (c.1845), Photogenic Drawing negative, 17.2 x 22.0 cm.

However, Batchen's sense of "wonder", as the phenomenal response to differentiality is problematic. It shifts the terms of the discourse of wonder which is associated with Talbot from its historically specific inflection, and it also reduces différance to the wonder of an aporetic experience which would have to include the opposition masculine-feminine. If the gender dimension of photographic aporia is left at this point, there are two effects. Firstly, the appropriative character of the facsimile is lost. The facsimile requires the impression of the feminine and organic in order to support its own discourse of paternal synthesis. Secondly, Batchen's application of the logic of spacing to the relation between object and print elides the differences within object and print.

The general impression of lace as a "feminine presence" dissolves into an aggregate of contradictory parts (as Batchen notes) – but these parts are not elemental, but self-differential. For example: the hand-stitched part indicates the machinisation of the body through the repetition of pattern, not simply the somatic.

Something like this effect would attend images of a bust Talbot referred to as Patroclus (fig.16). If the images of lace indicate Talbot's engagement with the industrial economy of reproduction (the images were designed to be used as models or templates), this image represents rather an engagement with the aesthetic economy of reproduction: it indicates something of an archival circularity in Talbot's practice, since it was purchased from a London shop which owed its licence to the British Museum. Like the lace, it is a composite and historically complex object – the head is Greek, the torso Roman, and the base Victorian. Much like the architecture of Lacock, with its acentric collage of periods and styles, the bust is deflective of singular historical unity. Both objects can be read less as figures of the difference between genders, but of their internal differences.

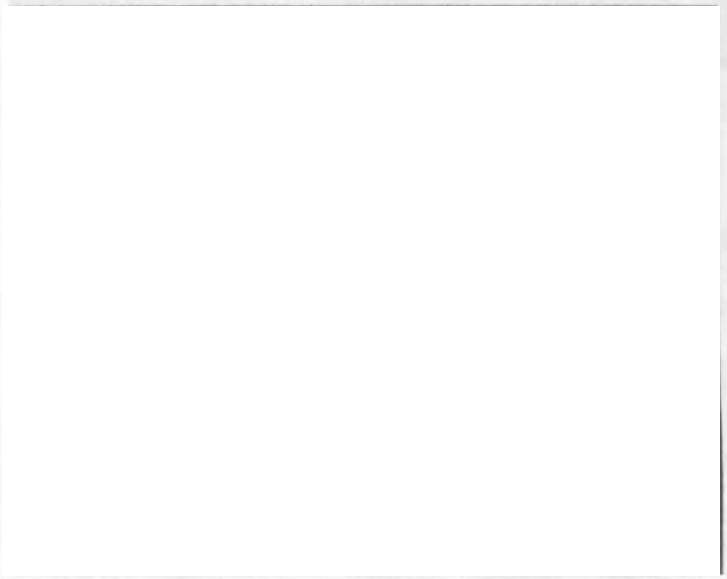

Fig.16: Talbot, *Study of bust of Patroclus* (c.1842), salt paper print from Calotype, 23.0 x 28.0 cm.

The attempt to regulate gendered differences is visible in *Sunlit Objects on a Window Ledge* (c.1840), where the glass flasks and the opened jewellery box beg comparison to the flask in Daguerre's atelier (fig.17).

Fig.17: Talbot, *Sunlit objects on a window ledge* (c.1840), salt paper print from Photogenic Drawing negative, 22.7 x 18.1 cm.

The objects mark transparency against Daguerre's opacity – the complete secret of the flask is here opened to the lens, with a mythical dimension: the casket refers to the lapsarian condition resulting from Pandora's violation of secrecy. But if that fable indicates the rupturing of the paternal unity of the domicile, the disruption of its eternal cyclicality from within, this image indicates an attempt to contain such plethora.

Each object is transparent or opened, and arranged to be isolated in space and delimitable by the specific perspective of this image. Should the position of the camera change, the objects would overlap, and, given the lack of detail, merge into indeterminacy. Along with Talbot's plant facsimiles, the feminine is here a specimen. The opened casket thus represents both the transgression of paternal law and the consequent desire for the surveillance, containment and penetration of the feminine in its secrecy. These culturally feminine objects have been oriented toward and regulated by the photographic, both in placement (classification) and transparency (probing), for purposes of survey and archivisation.[52]

These objects are part of a wider classification of the domestic, for example: *Table set for tea* (c.1841) indicates the circulation of objects within the domicile, and, given the images of social occasions, the circulation of the members of the domicile and their guests. Such images are the sign of a partial taxonomy of domestic routine. In the text in *The Pencil of Nature* which accompanies *Articles of China* (c.1843), Talbot remarks on its status as a legal document of ownership in the event of theft. The documentary function of the photograph thus has a petitionary function toward the law of the state which is directed at preparing for and amending contingent events.

The compositional arrangement of *Articles of Glass* (c.1844) effects the discrete isolation of objects toward the archiving of property – a specific function of the collection under the archons, and a reminder of the legal status of women and their

[52] Carol Armstrong notes the generic ambiguity of the image – neither purely aesthetic not purely taxonomic. I am arguing that these modes pertain to specific aspects of the image – the aesthetic to the feminine objects rather than to the soft focus and colouration, which are marks of the optical and chemical; the taxonomic to their arrangement. See Carol Armstrong, 'A Scene in a Library: An Unsolved Mystery', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 2002, p. 93. Armstrong argues that it is the very ambivalence of this image which determines its exclusion from the didacticism of *The Pencil of Nature* – the excluded indeterminacy would be a mark of the phobia of the self-differential, and of the unfinite, which I will argue is also indicated by another image included within *The Pencil of Nature – Scene in a Library.*

property in this time.[53] This taxonomic order cannot but reflect on the sunlit objects, despite their shift of perspective from frontality (fig.18).

Fig.18: Talbot, *Articles of Glass* (c.1844), salt paper print from Calotype, 22.5 x 18.6 cm.

Sunlit Objects indicates the slippage of archival concepts into the sphere of the domestic, marking the order and regulation of the circulation of signs, the economy of the domicile. Since *The Pencil of Nature* stands as a catalogue of the functions of photography, the image represents the desire to regulate its birth and development. The content of the image also represents the regulation of the feminine – a desire whose sociological avatar would be the ostensibly benevolence of regulating the untimely

[53] On the function of the archons, see Plato, 'Laws', in Edith Hamilton and Huntingdon Cairns (eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

sexual reproduction of the pauperage.[54] Given that this latter is aired by Talbot's wife, this is not an issue of sex.[55] It is rather, perhaps, a sign of the general diffusion of the industrial rationalisation of agrarian life.[56]

Talbot's practices thus maintain a coherent sense of archival order: etymology is designed to regulate and to penetrate the heterogeneity of linguistic differences; 'The Antiquity of Genesis' is designed to assert the historical presence of the biblical arché against the plethora of Pandora's woes; *Sunlit objects* represents an attempt to regulate the plethora of the feminine.[57] In this image, composition is, strictly, a mode of consignation. As Sekula notes, the development of surveillance through photographics involves the dichotomy between the "denotative univocality of the legal image and the multiplicity and presumed duplicity of the criminal voice", in which "photography came to establish and delimit the terrain of the *other*, to define both the *generalized look* – the typology – and the *contingent instance* of deviance and social pathology". The gender implication of this resistance to contingency is implicit in Sekula's following comments upon the dichotomies of the 'shadow archive' in its Foucauldean sense – where the feminine is thus associated with the self-differential, the equivocal:

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[54] Talbot's 'aristocratism' is marked as a turning-point, a transition between a feudal, landed economy and industrial capitalism. See Keeler, 'Inventors and Entrepreneurs', p. 26.
[55] Constance Talbot to Fox Talbot (17.04.1861), *Correspondence*, Document No. 08376.
[56] The role of photography in defining familial and social structures, like the nuclear family, is part of the "urban solution to looser models of agrarian communities in which children were born and raised in a less structured way". Roger Hargreaves, 'Putting Faces to the Names: Social and Celebrity Portrait Photography', in Peter Hamilton and Roger Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned: The Creation of Identity in Nineteenth Century Photography*, London: Lund Humphries in association with The National Portrait Gallery London, 2001, p. 54.
[57] Talbot's dream of the unified origin, and the intimation of the regulation of the feminine in *Sunlit Objects* offers a nascent and mytho-metaphysical sense of the use of photography toward the arché which will become more developed and scientised in Darwin's interest in Duchenne. Despite Duchenne's sense that the human face signifies divine creation, and that this truth could be proved by the construction of a photographic archive, the idea that expressions have a common physiological source provided Darwin with evidence that diverse humanity emerged from a common evolutionary progenitor. See Hamilton and Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, p. 69, p. 73, p. 75.

> the general, all-inclusive archive necessarily contains both the traces of the visible bodies of heroes, leaders, moral exemplars, celebrities, and those of the poor, the diseased, the insane, the criminal, the nonwhite, the female, and all other embodiments of the unworthy.[58]

The image deigns to reduce and homogenise the equivocality of femininity to delimited and transparent aesthetic objects of adornment, within a compositional aesthetic unity which is at once the sign of an archival order – taxonomic, legal, and petitionary. Likewise, the image of lace and the image of Patroclus attempt produce a unified impression of femininity and masculinity which homogenises their internal differences. The historical concatenation of the bust of Patroclus might indicate simulacral heterogeneity to contemporary theory, but could be enmeshed within the cyclicality of Vico's concept of history – as a sign of repeated returns to classical values. The images of this bust indicate the regulating function of aesthetic judgement, as does the lace. But in its milieu of the machinisation of feminine labour, the lace also signifies the regulation of the feminine within the industrial economy.

Note 2 – Femininity in the Industry of Photographic Reproduction.

Talbot's position on the gender of photo-reproductive labour is clear in correspondence of 1843. An economising drive indicates that the making of Calotype negatives would be carried out by an "artist", but that "the time requisite for making the copies would absorb those hours which he would much rather devote to making fresh pictures". Consequently, "[w]omen and children might be employed in that department"

[58] Alan Sekula, 'The Body and the Archive' (1986), in Richard Bolton (ed.), *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992, p. 345, p. 347.

– the 'merely mechanical' labour of reproduction.[59] Significantly, Talbot also refers to "workmen" in this regard: in Steve Edwards' reading of the relation between Talbot's processes and the gender-politics of industrialisation, this indicates the feminisation of labour. In Edwards' analysis, the photograph as an image which 'makes itself' is fetishistic in erasing the conditions of its own production – in extrapolation, an economic dimension to the erasure of differences in the idea of the 'virgin' moment (Derrida). It is also an erasure of the contingency of feminine nature, replaced by a "passive" form, and the attempted erasure of masculine anxiety.[60] Unable to manually copy detail within a tradition of picturesque sketching which had become the domain of accomplished amateur women (as in Talbot's female family members), photography attempts the "deskilling" and "re-masculinising" of visual reproduction.[61] Talbot's desire thus relates to Edward's description of Andrew Ure's *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835), in which machines are employed by the middle classes to undermine the power of male workers:

> [w]hile men resist the machine, he thinks of working women as interchangeable with it. [....] Because he believed the female worker was invisible the feminised factory was deemed to operate without workers. [62]

Feminising the factory effects an erasure that enables the fantasy of autogenic "abundance", and Talbot similarly attempts to replace skilled female labour with unskilled female labour by appropriating a passive photographic machinery which is

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[59] Fox Talbot to Améelina Petit de Billier (08.02.1843), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04722.
[60] Talbot's sense of graphic failure "was intensified by his new wife's ready facility" with the camera lucida. See Schaaf, 'Wonderful Illustration', p. 31. A more specific articulation of this point is given by Gray, 'Towards Photography', *Huellas de Luz*, p. 348.
[61] Edwards, 'The Dialectics of Skill', pp. 114-7.
[62] Ibid., pp. 115-6.

itself equated to the feminine, and by doing so, masculine intellect appears to be freed from material constraints. In Talbot's correspondence, photography is marked out in the male artist's freedom to choose, "manipulate", "combine and regulate" the process and the moment of exposure – in no sense is photography simply mechanical, or objective. The passive contingencies of the image, as "accidents of light, manipulation and the momentary expression of the sitter", are regulated by aesthetic judgement.[63]

As Christine Battersby argues, nostalgia for the disappearing agrarian economy required a revalorisation of cultural symbols previously attached to the feminine.[64] However, if the facility of mechanical reproduction required that creativity be laborious, Talbot also appears attached to the creative 'ease' by which Battersby characterises the Renaissance. In Talbot's economics, the female begins to be displaced from a relation to the organic, and attached to the industrial, in parallel with a contradictory image of femininity attached to 'bad' nature. The mechanicity of the feminine is, in Irigaray's reading, attached to biological reproduction. In Freud's traditional association of woman and matter, "Woman is nothing but the receptacle that passively receives" the male "product" – "Matrix – womb, earth, factory, bank – to which the seed capital is entrusted so that it may germinate [...] without woman being able to lay claim either to capital or interest since she has only submitted "passively" to reproduction".[65] "Thereby woman [...] becomes the anonymous worker, the machine in the service of a master-proprietor who will put his trademark on the finished product".[66] Like Freud, Talbot's

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[63] Fox Talbot to John Herschel (07.11.1853), *Correspondence*, Document No. 06862.
[64] Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*, London: The Women's Press, 1989, pp. 72-3.
[65] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 103, p. 106, p. 18.
[66] Ibid., p. 23.

image of working femininity carries a "misogyny" that "can be understood as *an ideological bond that bails out* the current regimes of property".[67] This correspondence allows a sense of how the feminine would ideally feature within Talbot's main venture to commercialise photographic reproduction, at the Reading Establishment. It makes a connection between feminine labour and the ad infinitum of copies, which is here not an object of fear, since it is paternally regulated – not only by the forces of the market, but by Talbot's patented paternity of the Calotype process.

Given that for much of the early experimental phases, of Photogenic drawing and the Calotype, Talbot's work took place around Lacock Abbey, Talbot's later commercial work would be seen as the extension of and refinement of a domestic, experimental and alchemical labour. This, in a developmental sense, is correct. However, as the indication of the ambivalently metaphysical and cultural background to Talbot's desire shows, Talbot's thought was already determined in part by philosophical and scientific logic and by financial concerns. The domestic scene is already a site of the imposition of such logic. The Como description is also enmeshed within an economy of copies, so that Talbot's establishment of a commercial photographic works marks the realisation of a desire which precedes its origin.

Talbot's photographic establishment set up at Reading in 1844, was almost equidistant between the domicile and the capital, a mediation linked by rail.[68] Reading represents both a departure from and an extension of a domestic scene which has already been regulated by the paternal. The classically informed gender stereotypes of

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[67] Ibid., p. 121.

[68] Unable to quite accept industrial capitalism, for Talbot Henneman becomes his "commercial incarnation" within the "paternalism of the master / slave relationship"; in which the distance of Reading from Lacock is a sign of this displacement, rather than the economic practicality of being between the domestic scene and the capitol. See Keeler, 'Inventors and Entrepreneurs', pp. 29-30.

the three graces in the right-hand panel of *The Reading Establishment* (c.1846) are situated within a production-line multiplication of prints of the plaster copy – an ad infinitum which is regulated by technique and industry (fig.19).

Fig.19: *The Reading Establishment* (c.1846), salt paper print from Calotype negative, 19.8 x 24.6 cm.

However, as Nancy Keeler indicates, this canonical photograph gives an illusiory impression of mass reproduction: "[o]n a day-to-day basis, it was probably operating at an even smaller capacity than is suggested".[69] The image visualises a desire for mass production, but simultaneously pastoralises a landscape, and within it a femininity, that is being increasingly mechanised. *The Pencil of Nature* attends to classical arts and to the detail of Oxbridge colleges against the motion of industry, sketching a typology of buildings which express mathematical, geometric, and cultural order – a pastoral topography, despite the inclusion of the industrial grime on Westminster Abbey and the new Martyrs' Monument in Oxford. Simply, the images produced for *The Pencil of Nature* at the Reading establishment indicate the industrial production of the pastoral

[69] Ibid., p. 30.

and the pastoralisation of the industrial. The images gesture towards the urban centre and towards the agrarian, domestic 'origin'. Reading is geographically and discursively situated at the threshold between the two extremes – it marks the crossing-point of a chiasmic exchange.

In '*Domus* and the Megalopolis' (1997), Lyotard provides a schema by which to think the relation between archives and domestic scenes, which indicates the paternalism of Talbot's bucolic images. In the naïve pastoral attitude, language, gesture, and memory are contained in the narratives of domestic activity, and the female servant is in the service of the patriarch and paternal gods.[70] In the cyclicality of the domus, the son will become *dominus*, the daughter *domina* – a controlled economy of equilibrium. It opposes *pleonexia*, "the delirium of growth with no return, a story with no pause for breath" – plethora, profit, the infinite excess of urban capital.[71] This bucolic domesticity is contrasted to the city *(megalopolis)*, which knows no *domus*, but only residence *(domicile)*. It binds the residents

> to another memory, the public archive, which is written, mechanographically operated, electronic. It does surveys of the estates and disperses their order. It breaks up god-nature [...] the bucolic regime is perceived as a melancholic survival. Sad tropics seen from the north.[72]

Capitalist rationalisation "hands over the care for memory to the anonymity of archives. No-one's memory, without custom, or story, or rhythm. A memory controlled by the

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[70] Jean-François Lyotard, '*Domus* and the Megalopolis', p. 196.
[71] Lyotard, '*Domus*', p. 192.
[72] Lyotard, '*Domus*', pp. 193-4. The nostalgic image of bucolia explicitly refers to Levi-Strauss, and this position is contained in *Structural Anthropology*: "[w]e are no longer linked to our past by an oral tradition which implies direct contact with others (storytellers, priests, wise men or elders), but by books amassed in libraries, books from which we endeavour – with extreme difficulty – to form a picture of their authors. And we communicate by all kinds of intermediaries – written documents or administrative machinery – which undoubtedly vastly extend our contacts but at the same time make those contacts somewhat 'unauthentic'". Quoted in Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 44.

principle of reason". In the description of the complex domicile, "the female servant with the heart of gold is impure. The service is suspect, ironic. [...] The domestic monad is torn, full of stories and scenes, haunted by secrets."[73] Here, the feminine disrupts the totality of paternal circularity, implying endless linear extent. Thus, if the naïve value of the domus has always attempted to obviate this destabilisation, the complex and irrational domus may resurface within the rationalised megalopolis. In doing so, it may deterritorialise the city, disrupt its topographical allocations, becoming the problematic sign of freedom against reason.

The lecture ends in affirming a *differend* – an aporia which calls for judgement.[74] This is no longer the judgement of the third critique, but represents an attempt to think beyond that judgement within the megalopolal scene. In an extended analysis of Lyotard's *Discourse, figure*, Bennington refers to Jean-Luc Nancy's 'Lapsus Judicii'. In this text, Nancy questions what happens when philosophy becomes juridical – as in the Roman thought represented in this thesis by Longinus. For Horace, for example, truth is "ultimately referred to the gods, and will be dealt with by the priests, the *pontifices*".[75] As the Roman avatars of the archons, the pontifex represents the state archives of the divine law. Kant would be a repetition of this mode in terms of the identity between the juridical and philosophical. Lyotard too is part of this identity, but with this qualification: in thinking the fracturing of the divine order in the bucolic domus, Lyotard displaces the pontifex from its position of archival authority. But by bearing witness to the complex domus within the megalopolis, this resistance may merely be

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[73] Lyotard, '*Domus*', p. 195.
[74] See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (1983), trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1988.
[75] Geoffrey Bennington, 'Ces Petits Différends': Lyotard and Horace' (1992), in *Legislations: The Politics of Deconstruction*, London and New York: Verso, 1994, pp. 168-70.

recuperated: pain, irrationality, and the unspeakable are grist to pleonexia's mill. Thus, though all that can be done is to bear witness, there is thus a condition: "The witness is a traitor."[76] Talbot, as theoria and archon of the singular arché, played out through the photographic penetration of the domestic scene, will inadverantly bear witness to the secretive economy of the complex domicile.

Note 3 – The Gendering of Domestic Apertures and the Resistance to Photographic Surveillance.

Talbot's photographic practices end with photomechanical reproduction, somewhere between image and text, with the gauze of feminine difference inscribed at the core of the process: there is also a differential and simulacral quality to the very architecture of the domestic scene. If part of the politics of gender in Talbot's images is played out through the photographic copying of gendered objects, this politics is also played out architecturally, concerning the style of windows that light the subjects. The formation of Talbot's architectural aesthetics through the discourse of the picturesque is indicated where Talbot notes that the "fine old pile" of Lacock had been "defaced with *modern* windows irregularly placed" (fig.20).[77] There is an opposition between the acceptable irregularity of the picturesque and the unacceptable irregularity of a modern window. The camera, given the camera obscura, stands as a miniaturisation of the room that it views, its lens the threshold of the window.[78] But the objects of the domicile, as their photographic representation, are not singular entities, but themselves divided,

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[76] Lyotard, '*Domus*', p. 204.
[77] Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, p. 72.
[78] Batchen provides an extended analysis of the window as threshold in Talbot, although the chiasmic structure is not recognised. See Geoffrey Batchen, 'A Philosophical Window', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 2002.

multiple, contradictory – a series of thresholds between times, techniques and genders. And if the aperture of the camera appears a neutral opening, this neutrality is displaced by the aesthetic position indicated by the aperture of the domicile.

Fig.20: Talbot, *Exterior view of the Oriel window at Lacock Abbey* (c.1840), salt paper print from Photogenic Drawing negative, 22.8 x 18.5 cm.

Several studies of Patroclus are lit by the Oriel windows of the south gallery of Lacock. They are characterised by gothic arches and latticed panes. It should be noted, however, that Talbot had these windows installed himself – they are neo-gothic, simulacral. The light which enters the domicile and which allows the camera to record its objects thus accesses through a specifically ideological-aesthetic aperture, and the window which sheds light on *Sunlit Objects* is square and modern in comparison to the

gothic. Architecturally, the feminine is here associated with a prior historical period, unaesthetic, modern, disordered, and aggregative – that which displaces the kind of return indicated by Vico. What differentiates this aggregation from the aperture of Patroclus is merely the impression of aesthetic conformity.

If the archiving gaze of the camera is turned inward upon the domicile, it is always turned from the darkness of the interior and toward the light of the exterior.[79] The repetition and proximity of windows in Talbot's interior images marks a particular restraint upon photography, a weakness or submission to natural contingency:

> There is not light enough for interiors at this season of the year, however I intend to try a few more. I find that a bookcase makes a very curious & characteristic picture: the different bindings of the books come out, & produce considerable illusion even with imperfect execution.[80]

Talbot's complaint to Herschel indicates the limit placed on photographic surveillance, in its colonisation and taxonomisation. What the photograph cannot archive, regulate, and determine is pure darkness – the interiority of the domicile. Because of this dependency on natural light, objects were taken outside for exposures.[81] This inverts the domestic interior, transgressing the threshold of the window or door in order to give a simulation of its interiority.[82] Likewise, given that images of the Lacock domestic scene were circulated within commercial spheres, this represents the opening of the interior,

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[79] Though photography has to encounter the darkroom as part of its process, the darkroom is itself not black, but lit by candles. Given the eighteenth century predilection for viewing statuary in candle-light, visually reproduced in the studies of Patroclus, the darkroom is not a strange place, but an amenable one on the threshold of darkness, familiarised by contemporary aesthetics.

[80] Fox Talbot to John Herschel (07.12.1839), *Correspondence*, Document No. 03987. Emphasis in original *passim*.

[81] Roberts, 'Traces of Light', in *Huellas de Luz*, p. 375.

[82] The crossing point of this inversion is the threshold. Weaver analyses Talbot's 'The Open Door' (1844) as an image which figures the enlightening broom of Stoic reason – see Weaver, 'Diogenes with a Camera', p. 2. Though the sweeping penetration of the room asserts the determination of the domestic recess is either implicit or potential, the broom must lie across the threshold in order to be visible.

the private, toward the exterior and public. Talbot's practice marks the extension of a domestic practice into the sphere of the commercial, but only as much as it represents the extension of industrial technics of vision into the domestic sphere. This dual movement, like the industry of pastoralisation, is chiasmic. The photographic simulation of interiority literalises, and obscures, such chiasmic exchange. Architecturally, Lacock is arranged around the open quadrangle of the cloisters, displacing the idea of a dark centre to the domicile. The window featured in *Sunlit Objects* opens onto the interior of the house, which encloses an outside as an inside. As with chiasmic exchange, movement inverts toward its opposite. But this only means that the dark core of the domicile is not to be found at its architectural centre, and nor is the darkness of feminine secrecy located in some essential core, but in differences, displacements – the acentric. The following parts of this chapter indicate that a fear of darkness and secrecy is operative in Talbot's practice in a way which reiterates the metaphysical figure of the recess, precisely as an issue of the archival, the feminine, and the ad infinitum.

Graft 3 – The Femininity of the Archival Ad Infinitum: Burke.

This association of terms has a philosophical precursor in Burke. In *A Philosophical Enquiry* (1759), Burke's analysis of the sublime attempts to locate the uniformity of sensory data as that which subsists the infinite variety of taste – an artificial, social product.[83] In the political writings, the social is feminine: the positive relation between nation and state pertains to the beautiful where "the mass of the people

[83] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757, 2nd edition 1759), Introduction: On Taste, in David Womersley (ed.), *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful and Other Pre-revolutionary Writings*, London: Penguin Books, 1998, p. 64, p. 73, p. 65.

is melted into its Government".[84] In the context of the colonies, Britain is figured as a 'good' form of femininity: the mother country of "rebellious children".[85] The femininity of Nature is similarly figured within terms of paternal control: its laws are the laws of god – nature bears the impress of a paternal design which conditions the terror of the 'good' sublime.[86]

As archon of paternal law, Burke's 'Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol' (1777) reiterates the Platonic-Aristotlean relationship between legality and individuality: law is necessarily abstract in relation to the "infinite" diversity of individual differences.[87] The generality of the law is what allows it to function in equality, and without undue procrastination, in time. Burke's defence is politically expedient: the law has been called into question by the American rebellion. The danger of the situation has a specific character – indeterminacy and delay: the future is "intricate, dark, and full of perplexed and treacherous mazes", a "labyrinth".[88] This intimation of a relation between law and a bad form of the ad infinitum is laid out in Burke's 'A Vindication of Natural Society' (1756), which opposes "the Labyrinth of the Law, and the Iniquity conceived in its intricate Recesses."[89] Law is positioned within artificial society's general "Labyrinth of Art". Natural law is not inscribed in texts and archived, but inscribed on the individual via the senses or through recognition of the immaterial: Burke argues that the "spirit of English communion" is the matrix for national and colonial cohesion, the

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[84] Burke, 'Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol' (1777), in Womersley, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 421.
[85] Ibid., p. 405.
[86] Burke, 'A Vindication of Natural Society: Or, A View of the Miseries and Evils Arising to Mankind from Every Species of Artificial Society' (1756, 2nd Edition 1757), in Womersley, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 20, p. 47.
[87] Burke, 'Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol', p. 429, p.431.
[88] Ibid., p. 413.
[89] Burke, 'Vindication', p. 47.

glue of the "mysterious whole".[90] Thus, the infinity of the social is positive where determined by paternal law; but it becomes otherwise sublime in endless politicking, and in the infinite magnitude of the proliferating texts of the archive of artificial law.[91] Without the grounds of certainty provided by natural society, civil society is dependent upon the arts, just as the arts are dependent upon civil society, this relationship "running in a Circle [...] without End".[92] Burke effectively sees this relationship as an archival motor – which generates the production of texts and counter-texts, ad infinitum.

> Differences arose upon the Sense and Interpretation of these Laws. [...] New Laws were made to expound the old; and new Difficulties arose upon the new Laws; as Words multiplied, Opportunities for cavilling upon them multiplied also. Then Recourse was had to Notes, Comments, Glosses, Reports, *Responsa Prudentum*, learned Readings [...]. Some adopted the Comment, other stuck to the Text. The Confusion increased, the Mist thickened [...].[93]

The description of the procrastinating political machine, figured by references to secrecy, darkness and obscurity, indicates characteristics of the sublime.[94]

The feminine ad infinitum produces an image of recessed obscurity which negatively mirrors the paternal sublime – a form of the "artificial infinite" associated to social disorder in Burke's image of the mass.[95] What is problematic for the clarity of the

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[90] Burke, 'Speech on Conciliation with America' (1775), in *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 394. The wrong placed on America is here precisely the deprivation of legal representation.

[91] See Christine Battersby, 'Stages on Kant's Way: Aesthetics, Morality, and the Gendered Sublime', in Peggy Brand & Carolyn Korsmeyer (eds.), *Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press 1995, pp. 90-2. Battersby's comparison of the masculinity of the mediations of learning to the immediacy of the feminine indicates the problematic status of the archive in the discourse of the sublime: it is necessary, but is only positive to the extent that it is mastered in order for the masculine experience of the sublime. Thus the archive holds a comparable position to that of nature.

[92] Burke, 'Vindication', p. 45.

[93] Ibid., p. 38.

[94] Ibid., p. 34, p. 40.

[95] Burke, *Enquiry*, pp. 104-7. The archival dimension of aesthetics is indicated where the gendered forms of the beautiful and the sublime are tools for the classification of objects. See Paul Mattick, 'Beautiful and Sublime: "Gender Totemism" in the Constitution of Art' (1990), Brand & Korsmeyer, *Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics*, p. 27, p. 36.

Burkean discourse is that this image appears to deform the opposition between beautiful and sublime, feminine and masculine. It is problematic precisely in that it is not accounted for in the same way as the deteriorating feminisation of old age within Burke's image of the paternally regulated domestic scene.[96] This impression of the feminine is not only the inverse image of the conceptual logic of patriarchal discourse, but a force which might disrupt the opposition of gendered forms. This femininity appears as an archival fact: rather than simply being restrained within the domicile, the feminine is an issue of the socio-political.[97]

The feminine secrecy of the archival ad infinitum is not only a general feature of Talbot's discourse; it is played out specifically in relation to the legal archives of the state. But this fear of feminine endlessness will be seen to mask a deeper phobia. If Burke admits a thought of the bad sublime as an effect of deformation, in Talbot the feminine will also appear as an effect of the undoing of opposites – masculine and feminine, ad infinitum and absolute – and a recognition of the self-differential, the unfinite.

§ 3 – Archival Forms of Secrecy and Resistance.

Note 1 – Talbot's Opposition to the Institutional and Domestic Archives.

Talbot's correspondence is littered with references to secrets that are familial and domestic, scientific, metaphysical, legal, and institutional. For example, the nascent theory of the latent image is commonly related to Talbot's interest in secret writing.

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[96] Burke, 'Enquiry', pp. 145-6. "The authority of a father, so useful to our well-being, and so justly venerable upon all accounts, hinders us from having that entire love for him that we have for our mothers, where the parental authority is almost melted down into the mother's fondness and indulgence. But we generally have a great love for our grandfathers, in whom this authority is removed a degree from us, and where the weakness of age mellows it into something of a feminine partiality."

[97] Burke represents a moment in the secularisation of the sublime – the political sublime is the infinite and incommensurable state apparatus. See Simon During, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 150-1.

These secrets are, always, shared within specific areas of delimitation. Prior to the declaration of 1839, Talbot's secret invention is known within the familial scene, along with other knowledges about family activities, but not much beyond this sphere – until the proper legal securities are in place. The familial is a scene of the circulation of secret information, in the milieu of a domicile which itself has architectural secrets, like hidden stairways. Talbot's discourse is thus marked by the regulation of the circulation of information, and which bears, for example, upon relations to the specific archives of the Royal Society.

A paper submitted to the Society, which represents a petition for recognition of Talbot as natural-scientific theoria by the archons of science, was rejected without explanation. Subsequently, Talbot complained that "such a system of secrecy, or mystery, should prevail".[98] Herschel's response indicates antipathy to the bureaucratic form of the ad infinitum, its "indefinite" conduct and need for "perpetual remonstrance".[99] Talbot wondered whether the subject of the paper must be kept secret until it has been read, even though it has already been submitted, arguing that "it would have been absurd to keep entire secrets for many months, until the reassembling of the Society".[100] Within the context of Talbot's increasingly protracted legal-economic entanglements, this indicates the impatient desire to circulate information, a desire which is driven by economic, epistemological and social concerns. Pure, or 'entire' secrets, like the darkness of the domicile, interrupt the flow of knowledge and money, and must be mediated, even if this transgresses institutional codes – indeed: if a secret is always brought into social being by being shared, it is always the sign of a

[98] Fox Talbot to John Herschel (01.07.1841), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04293.
[99] John Herschel to Fox Talbot (05.07.1841), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04297.
[100] Fox Talbot to John Herschel (25.07.1841), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04314.

transgression. As regulated transgression, the secret is a positive form, just as aesthetic judgement regulates the contingency of the image. But, given the "very singular chance" of Daguerre's announcement, the events of history offer a contingency which resists such mastery.[101] Archival petition, of the sort indicated by Talbot's relation to the Royal Society, would be a mode by which such emasculating contingency might be controlled.[102]

The domestic corollary of this resistance to the resistance of the institution is indicated in a letter to Talbot from Elisabeth Fielding:

> I have just received your parcel & and so determined to keep the green secret that I burnt Constance's letter before putting it out of my hand, so that no human eye could see it, nor no human brain be the wiser for that communication [...] I would much rather you did not have a Key made for the Portfolio case, or only in the last emergency. [...] I believe those small costumes of yours are not in it [...]. En attendant will buy some of the right size [...] rather [...] than have the key imitated.[103]

This indicates the sharing of a domestic secret, and a resistance to the optical transfer of information for inscription within the psyché marked by the destructive drive; but also Talbot's resistance to a feminine opposition to his access within the domestic milieu – the feminine is here the archon, holder of the key. This quotidian situation mirrors that in which the desire for the penetration of the darkness of the domicile reiterates the desire for the penetration of feminine nature in the male imaginary of preceding and contemporary scientific discourse – the association of women and secrecy is marked in

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[101] Fox Talbot to Jerdan William (30.01.1839), *Correspondence*, Document No. 03782.
[102] Lyotard recognises that photography offers two areas of challenge to mechanographics: the relation to referential reality and speed of circulation. The Calotype has a complex and ambivalent relation to the referent – the acceptance and valorisation of lack of detail and the affirmation of the aesthetic power of manipulation. Talbot's impatience clearly registers the desire for speed of circulation, which is a facet of performativity and power. Jean-François Lyotard, 'What is Postmodernism', *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, 1992, p. 74.
[103] Elisabeth Theresa Fielding to Fox Talbot (xx.11.1841), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04352.

the English translation of Giovanni della Porta's *Natural Magick*: "female genitalia are referred to explicitly as 'the Secrets', and the expression, 'penetration into the secrets of nature', accordingly takes on a strikingly virile character".[104]

There is then both a resistance to other's secrets, a desire to penetrate the other's recess, and a resistance to the opening of one's own secrets. Talbot's inversion of the domestic interior breaches the privacy of the domestic scene, both in its visualisation of the interior and the circulation of the images as proofs of process. Against the purity of the secret and the obscurity of the ad infinitum, Talbot's overall economic drive is toward a regulated and constant circulation toward accumulation and clarification – a figure of positive infinity, in epistemological terms, which is enmeshed within the ad infinitum of capital circulation. But what this discourse circles around, as a recognition of its own limits, is the idea of an ad infinitum of differences which may not be reduced to a unity.

Note 2 – The Resistance of Darkness and the Phobia of the Unfinite: *Scene in a Library.*

In comparison to the forensic arrangement of discrete objects in *Sunlit Objects*, the books of *Scene in a Library* (1844) are arranged in mediate disorder, regulated by a picturesque composition which is merely more pronounced in an earlier version of the image *Disordered Library* (c.1841). Two systems of order are indicated: the rational

[104] Elsea, *Fathering the Unthinkable*, pp. 25-6.

irregularity of picturesque spatial arrangement and the taxonomic spatial arrangement of the library's architecture.[105]

Fig.21: Talbot, *Scene in a Library* (c.1844), salt paper print from Calotype negative, 23.0 x 18.7 cm.

The library does not appear as a site of dangerous proliferation, but one contained by the aesthetic. The image represents Talbot's studies: aesthetic, natural-scientific, philosophical, philological and etymological – the texts represent masculine practice in comparison to the sunlit objects (fig.21). With something of an intimation of the ad infinitum, Armstrong compares this image to Daguerre's *Shells and Fossils* – both represent photography through its collection. But where the former frames the visible,

[105] If the opticality of Western discourse from Plato onwards indicates part of the matrix that will produce later technologies of vision, and hence the identity of the textual and visual, the prehistory of the photographic is witness to this identity. The first published discovery of a light sensitive chemical was the product of an alchemical endeavour – a metaphysical, arcane and mythical activity. In 1727 (because of the contamination of a reagent with silver), Schulze's attempt to repeat the creation of phosphorous, produced a chemical which blackened under light (scotophorous). Schulze placed a stencil of text around the glass container of chemical and thus wrote upon the substance. This effectively imitates the labelling of chemicals, so it is clear that from its latency, photography is enmeshed within a textual economy with taxonomic (archival) and mythic resonances. The attempt to produce phosphorous (by Balduin in 1674) was itself a serependitious failure to create a substance that could contain *Weltgeist*. The chemical precursors for Talbot's photography, through Balduin, Schulze, Davy and Wedgewood, emerge from the contingent mishaps of early romantic transcendentalism. (For the basic connections between these figures see Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present* (Revised Edition), London: Secker & Warburg, 1982, p. 13.)

the latter suggests that the image is a partial indication of a library which carries on beyond its edge.[106] Such would intimate the archival ad infinitum, which Talbot's etymological endeavours produce as a phobic, feminine object. A comparable sense of extension beyond the frame is implied by Batchen where *The Milliner's Window* (1843) suggests "the possibility of an endless supply of feminine consumer goods [... .] that caters explicitly to a newly kindled, bourgeois, female desire".[107] The difference between these associations of femininity and the ad infinitum would be that the archival form represents a dangerous force, whereas (a contained form of) the infinity of the commodity is something which is striven for.

The text which accompanies *Scene in a Library* muses on the future of prismatic optics – light in both its literal, scientific form, and its metaphorical sense. Armstrong suggests that the text indicates "a meeting between the mostly masculine world of scientific experimentation and the feminine domain of the 'romance'" – but as I will argue, this would be a form of 'good' femininity which occludes the association of the feminine and the indeterminate.[108] Talbot hypothesises whether light from the invisible spectrum could be directed into a dark room, by which a photograph might be taken of its occupants, by which the lens would see where the eye could not, and ends: "what a *dénouement* we should have, if we could suppose the secrets of the darkened chamber to be revealed by the testimony of the imprinted paper."[109] Here Talbot's paranoiac desire is proximate to Pandora's curiosity: unable to resist the secret recess of the closed casket (but in order to close it), Talbot's femininity is a reflection of the paternal image of

[106] Armstrong, 'A Scene in a Library', p. 91.
[107] Batchen, 'A Philosophical Window', pp. 105-6.
[108] Armstrong, 'A Scene in a Library', p. 94.
[109] Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature*, pp. 90-2.

feminine transgression. Given the assertion that in future it must "inevitably succeed", Talbot's prognosis is of a future unknotting of complications toward a final solution – it attempts to penetrate the future, just as it is a description of penetration of darkness.

Despite the optimism of this prognosis, by which the power of the photographer as theoria and archon would be extended, what this also registers is scotophobia. In the strange connections of the text that occurs with the library image there lurks this possibility: if photography cannot access the invisible via the science of optics, but encounters a secret recess, this might also be the case for the facsimiles of texts – which would fail to acquire the etymological arché and thus merely proliferate, ad infinitum.[110] The darkness indicated by the text on invisible light photography is hence optical and metaphorical, literal and epistemological. The possibility of invisible light photography exceeds the parameters of fiction and cannot be circulated in this form – too technical, too futuristic, is the implication, even if *The Pencil of Nature* is the proper circulatory form for such prognoses.

A fear of the dark is also registered in Talbot's correspondence with Herschel regarding the construction of the universe. Having mis-read an assertion of Herschel's, that though the universe may or may not be infinite the "distance of every individual body in the universe from us is therefore necessarily admitted to be finite", Talbot responds:

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[110] Talbot's emphasis on the artist's powers of regulation indicate that it is erroneous to ascribe a simple belief in the photograph as a "natural sign" opposed to the "wholly cultural" form of writing – this opposition being disturbed by the development of the chemistry of the latent image through the idea of secret writing. Krauss undermines the opposition where the photography of the darkened chamber would make intelligible the psychology of occupants, as writing transcribes thought, but what the prognosis indicates is a resistance to such transcription which reiterates less the interior of Talbot's psychology but the exteriority of a cultural thought: the femininity of the recess. See Krauss, 'Tracing Nadar'.

> If the material universe be finite, then is it but as a mere speck in illimitable space. Everywhere else extends darkness without end – The mind finds it difficult to acquiesce in this belief.[111]

Given Talbot's aesthetic heritage, this image is indubitably sublime, but as Kristeva indicates in *Powers of Horror*, the sublime 'edges' the abject.[112] In this sense, Talbot intersects with abjection as the "degree zero of spatialization" in Burgin's reading of Kristeva. The *horror vacui* of classical cosmologies posits a replete space in which "God's creation was fullness without gap", an abjection of the void which is maintained in Renaissance theories of perspective: "the vanishing point is not an integral part of the space of representation; situated on the horizon, it is perpetually pushed ahead as the subject expands its own boundary".[113]

But Talbot's thought not only resists the infinite extension of maternal darkness, marking the desire for the penetration of paternal light. Talbot appears to resist, alongside or behind this thought of the infinite, a sense in which the universe, in Herschel's supposed logical 'fallacy', would be internally contradictory – different from itself. The resistance to self-different darkness is thus connected to Pandora – figure of the displacement of the singular paternal arché.

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[111] Fox Talbot to John Herschel (17.03.1841), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04214. Herschel's point is rather that there would be an infinite number of finite distances between the physical bodies of an infinite universe. See also: Herschel to Talbot (22.03.1841), *Correspondence*, Document No. 04222.

[112] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980) trans. Leon S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, p. 11.

[113] Victor Burgin, 'Geometry and Abjection', in John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (eds.), *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 122, n. 39, p. 118. Non-Euclidian cosmology is imaged as a 'torus': "a psychical space in which the subject repetitively comes into being, in a procession which circumscribes a central void – locus of the lost object, and the subject's death." Some gain might be found in comparing the torus to the cloistered architecture of Lacock – not because the void appears at the centre of the domicile (the courtyard) but within its ring.

The limit placed on the archival activities of the camera are not on the outside of the domicile – as the spread of the photographic industry from Reading to London and beyond indicates – but on the inside. What prohibits photography is not the ad infinitum of capital, properly managed, nor the determinate and aestheticised darkness between the books, but the indeterminate darkness of the domestic scene. Where the ad infinitum emerges is through a fear of differences which are masked by a fear of the darkness – Talbot's recess reflects not only the darkness of the epistemological arché, and a fear of infinitely extended space, that which resists visualisation, but a fear of the self-differentiality of the origin – neither endless nor absolute: the unfinite.

Impression 3 – Visual Research: Untitled (The Shades).

This piece is comprised of two standard projection screens, each repainted in a hyper-glossy version of its own colour. Using such screens in everyday activities, I began to think of them as blinds which protect the wall from the projected image, moving or still, and hence to thinking of the behind of the screen as a space of protection, a darkened recess from the spectacle. The problem was then how to positively valorise such a space, and to project it as an affect. By hanging the screens horizontally, the space beneath became a shaded retreat from the sun, but also from an infinity of images in the world. This represents a desire for protection from the archive and its proliferating images (fig.22).

Fig.22: Sas Mays, *Untitled (The Shades)*, installation shot (colour photograph, dimensions variable), projector screens, paint, tension cables.

Rather than the cortical shield which filters sensory impressions in Freud's 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', the screen represents a block – a resistance to archiving impressions within the psyché.[114] To some extent, the recess became a respite from sight associated with blindness, thoughtlessness, leisure, and even, then, stupidity and death. But this should not suggest, against the historically masculine sun, an association of these terms with the maternal, nor their prevalence. In their proximity to café awnings, there is also a suggestion of a place of discussion – a public sphere.

Concluding Note – The Archival Transitionality of Talbot: a Historical Position.

Despite the general sense of a positive valorisation of archival accumulation affirmed by the discourse of infinite detail and by the proponents of the Calotype, the discourses outlined in this and the previous chapter register ambivalence concerning their own relations to the ad infinitum. Each process produces a sense of the recess, as a mode of the feminine, which directly corresponds to the problematics of its technique, and in this sense, photographics effect the transformation of the archival ad infinitum.

To some extent, the relation between Arago and Talbot can be described through the difference between two metanarratives which legitimate institutional scientific research: the French political tradition of revolutionary, libertarian thought and the Germanic contemplative tradition of speculative epistemological unity.[115] Talbot would

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[114] See Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, London: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 11, 1984, 1991, pp. 297-8.

[115] Frederic Jameson, 'Introduction', in Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. ix. Jameson schematises the opposition in the foreword. If science is recast by Lyotard as the labour of paralogism "to produce *more* work" and to "make it new" (p. ix) by undermining the epistemological terms of previous discourses, this model of discourse as archival production would bear comparison to the sense of archival production operating in this thesis – where the opacity, failure, and conflict of the archive is the very motor of archival accumulation. Within Lyotard's mechanism lies, in terms of aesthetic and popular paralogism, the motor of

thus represent a more archaic discourse in the process of displacement by scientific positivism; and, hence, Hill and Adamson would represent a resistance to this historical force. This difference has an archival dimension:

> the radical differentiation between the consumption of the past in narrative and its storage, hoarding, and capitalisation in "science" and scientific thought: a mode of understanding that [...] will little by little determine a whole range of ever more complex and extensive institutional objectifications – first in writing; then in libraries, universities, museums; with the breakthrough in our own period to microstorage, computerized data, and data banks of hitherto unimaginable proportions, whose control or even ownership is [...] one of the crucial *political* issues of our time.[116]

Talbot's position within this schema would be transitional – a combination of abstract technological scientificity and mythic, craft-based domesticity. The text accompanying *Scene in a Library* would resolve, from this perspective, as an attempt to obliterate the differential darkness of the complex domestic origin through the prognoses of scientific abstraction, and to shift the place of memory from the psychic, domicilliary archive to the technological, institutional archive. In this sense, the library text exists at a chiasmic point between the past and the future. Such transitionality would also be inscribed in economic terms – Talbot's technical and financial failures in the attempt to commercialise photographic production being part of the process of the industrialisation at large.

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pleasure in the "endless invention" of moves, a positive and creative force made in resistance to the ordinary language of connotation. This does not signal the infinite in its classical sense, since the incompossibility of the event is disruptive of linear, accumulative temporality.

[116] Ibid., pp. xii-xiii. Jameson's affirmation of the political unconscious (p. xii), against the deep superficiality of capitalist postmodernity, and the ad infinitum of its "dynamic of perpetual change", is an attempt to relocate, within a metaphorics of the redemptive access to a recess, the 'genuinely political' form of positive infinity which has itself been recessed from possibility (p. xx). The extent to which this complex attachment to the Hegelian-Marxist tradition might carry its gendered rhetoric of the recess into proximity or conflict with Jameson's consciously articulated stance on femininity is a question which must remain outside of the remits of this thesis.

Talbot's practices gesture toward a future condition: Lyotard's description of the disruption of the organic image of the body-politic, in which the commodification of information "will begin to perceive the State as a factor of opacity and 'noise'" indicates the nascency of this conflict in Talbot's relation to the Royal Society.[117] In this the institution's requirements concerning what is archived within it, the requirement for the secrecy, property and arrest of information conflicts with Talbot's desire to circulate and exchange. That this desire is mediated is indicated in Talbot's increasingly protracted and hapless legal entanglements, which require petition to the law, indicating a desire to regulate exchange between free circulation and institutional arrest. But Talbot's secrecy also gestures toward the genesis of this conflict in natural philosophy: Bacon's antipathy to the state is manifest in *The New Atlantis* (1627): "we [...] take all an oath of secrecy for the concealing of those [inventions] which we think fit to keep secret."[118]

If Roman philosophy is witness to a growing identification with the state, which culminates in Hegel, it might be argued that Talbot represents a stage in the decay of this reciprocity as a product of the growing distance between the state's demands for conformity and the individualism of entrepreneurial capital.[119] A context for this displacement is provided by Foucault: where the proletariat is the unconscious sign of the universal, its literary conscience is the "universal writer" – an extension of the figure of the universal legislator.[120] As the jurist of ideal law, the universal writer adopts the

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[117] Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, p. 5.
[118] Abridged in Hollander and Kermode, *Literature of Renaissance England*, p. 962.
[119] See Geoffrey Bennington, 'Ces Petits Différends': Lyotard and Horace' (1987) , in *Legislations: The Politics of Deconstruction*, London: Verso, 1994, pp. 168-170.
[120] Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power' (1977), in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980, pp. 126-8.

Platonic position of the archon of right in its opposition to state law and its archives.[121] The conscience of the awkward transition from agrarian aristocracy to industrial capitalism, and from natural philosophy to modern science, Talbot is also ambivalently positioned in regard of the state archives of law. State institutions are petitioned for inclusion (consignation), yet also appear as impenetrable recesses – in the position of the feminine. Talbot appears somewhere between the Roman and Platonic positions.

In the following chapter, the position adopted by Stieglitz is less ambivalently attached to the literary position of the universal legislator, and this aesthetic autonomy has an archival dimension: there is a greater separation between individualistic forms of accumulation, storage and dissemination and what has the position of the state – the archives of the major American museums. Given the patriarchy of Stieglitz's practice, state or institutional archives appear in a feminine position; but what Stieglitz marks in terms of the shifts in the gender politics of photographic infinities is an excessively penetrative relation to the femininity of the recess.

[121] Plato presents the difference between philosophy (right) and state (law) as that between justice *(dike)* and injustice *(adikonti)*. As an opposition between state writing and philosophical speech, this is also an opposition between the written archive and noumenal truth. See 'Apology', in Hamilton and Cairns, *Collected Dialogues*.

CHAPTER 3 –
The Dis(-)closure of the Feminine:
The Containment of Endlessness in American Modern Photography –
Stieglitz, Strand, and Weston.

Introductory Note – the Aporias of Photography and Theory: a Problem of Endlessness.

The historical filiation from the preceding chapter is marked by the figure of D.O. Hill, who appears in the photographic tradition established by Alfred Stieglitz as a proponent of expressive form.[1] In Stieglitz's pictorialist phase, the softness of the Calotype would be germane to such appropriation, but Hill's position is maintained in Stieglitz's straight phase. Hill becomes one pole of a synthetic relationship between expression and objectivity. In this schema, Henry Peach Robinson would represent another attempt to mediate between plastic expression and photographic sharpness, but in a way that for Stieglitz would require an exit from the 'purely' photographic.[2] Rather, these positions are attemptedly fused in Stieglitz's straight phase in the combination of expression and objectivism, in which symbolism contains the dangerous excess of details in its credo 'maximum detail and maximum simplification'. Yet the hierarchy is clear: expression is the privileged term.

Formal simplification is a compositional device, a way of consigning details to unity within the frame. As in Talbot's compositional determination of femininity, formal arrangement is the photographic equivalent of archival consignation – it is an archival mode: gathering together signs in relation to each other, under the name of the universal. These, then, are issues of what can be photographically recorded, archived: for Stieglitz, the feminine is subject to an absolute exposure – rather than being recessed, the feminine is disclosed to the paternal gaze. In its analysis of the relations to

[1] Paul Strand, 'Photography and the New God' (1922), in Alan Trachtenberg (ed.), *Classic Essays on Photography*, New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980, pp. 146-7.
[2] As would O.J. Rejlander's composite negatives and their classically contained fragmentation of the female body. See Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth-Century Photography*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. 19-21.

this kind of disclosure in Stieglitz, Strand, and Weston, the labour of this chapter turns upon the way in which such disclosure or closure might be thwarted, twisted, or logically incoherent ... the way in which the feminine may be dis-closed.

The relationship between objectivity and expression, and between the ad infinitum and the absolute is a feature of the tradition in question, and of its critique; although the binary for left-political analysis is rather the relation between endlessness and totality. In 'The Invention of Photographic Meaning' (1975), Sekula contrasts Stieglitz's symbolism to Hine's realism as a mark of the ineluctable contradictions of bourgeois culture. The contradiction is also stated in Peter Bürger's 'Aporias of Modern Aesthetics' (1991), the general conformity of the papers indicating the figure of Lukàcs. Bürger states the opposition as that between romanticism and realism. The former, in literary modernity, "seizes passionately at the sheer endlessness" of linguistic possibility, but "[d]iscovering that its limitless power over linguistic combinations is simply the obverse of its impotence in the face of reality, [...] escapes into the bosom of the church."[3] With some qualifications concerning the secularisation of the theological, and the secondarised but maintained position of the referent in Stieglitz's practice, this very much accounts for its relations to the infinite. In translation, the limitless powers of man in de Zayas's writings would be dependent upon formal combination, this giving access to the universal – and a psychoanalytic version of god: the unconscious as a limitless field. For Bürger the latter term, realism, exists in the fantasy of perfect transparency which inversely reveals that the world is a product of

[3] Peter Bürger, 'Aporias of Modern Aesthetics', in Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (eds.), *Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics*, London: Institute of Contemporary Arts London, 1991, p. 11.

literary technique.[4] As the translation of the metaphorics of Bürger's text indicates, endless possibility and endless deferral are issues of virility and emasculation – and this in a much more determined sense in Stieglitz.

The contradiction between the two terms is evidenced in Stieglitz's sense of the ineluctable oscillation between order and disorder, internal equilibrium and external contingency. For Bürger there is no synthesis of these poles, or between political and messianic "overinflation", only the "endless play of displacements" which occur at an entirely institutional level.[5] Given the historical avant-garde's engagement in institutional critique, Bürger is left with an affirmation of an impossible opposition to the institutions of art, an endlessness within the cycle of recuperation, ad infinitum. This states an oppositional logic – between the possible and impossible, between the ad infinitum and the absolute – which must deny itself the revolution of positive infinity other than in its social form.

What I want to suggest, tentatively, is that there is a different relation to symbolism and affect which is not available through the positive signs of its function, nor through the things it attempts to exclude from itself – not only the referent and the social, but the feminine coding of the ad infinitum. That which is deleterious to paternal synthesis is not only figured as the feminine endlessness or recess, or as other forms whose degraded position attaches them to the feminine, for example: mechanical reproduction and domesticity. Behind these erasures and presences there is a doubly erased non-presence which is not strictly of either gender.

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[4] Bürger, 'Aporias', p. 12.
[5] Ibid., p. 13.

§ 1 – Stieglitz: Photography Archiving the Infinites.

Note 1 – The Singularity of the Print: an opposition to the Photographic Ad Infinitum.

Any account of the status of the rhetoric of detail in Stieglitz's practice and thought must be subject to the shifts in posture adopted toward photography in the movement away from the pictorialism of the Photo-Secession established in 1902 and toward Strand's straight photography toward the end of the publication of *Camera Work* in 1917. The relationship of pictorialism to sharpness emerges in Stieglitz's 'A Plea for Art Photography in America' (1892): the relation to external nature is essentially characterised by "atmosphere", which, with the qualification that tone is not blurring,

> softens all lines; it graduates the transition from light to shade; it is essential to the reproduction of the sense of distance. [...] Now, what *atmosphere* is to nature, *tone* is to a picture. The sharp outlines which we Americans are so proud of as being proof of great perfection in our art are *untrue* to nature, and hence an abomination to the artist.[6]

Against endless particularity, the photographic is here attached to infinitely smooth gradation of tone, endless particularity appearing within the category of the monstrous (abomination) which, in nineteenth-century aesthetics is pervasively coded feminine – the product of a bad birth. This position indicates the influence of P.H. Emerson, for whom "biting accuracy" was "quite fatal from the artistic standpoint", and for whom the development from the Daguerreotype to glossy print papers is a mark of a "general delight in detail" and "blind, sunshiny effects".[7] Emerson here indicates an antipathy to

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[6] Alfred Stieglitz, 'A Plea for Art Photography in America' (1892), in Sarah Greenough and Juan Hamilton (eds.), *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings*, (exhibition catalogue), National Gallery of Art, Washington USA 1983, p. 182.

[7] Cited in Ben Maddow (ed.), *Edward Weston: His Life and Photographs*, Revised Edition, New York: Aperture, 1979, p. 16, p. 23.

the mass market which is also manifest in Stieglitz, where the failure to adhere to this wisdom has produced a plethora of unnatural, conventional photographs of familiar subjects "the same etc., etc., *ad infinitum*".[8] Stieglitz thus states an association between endless detail and endless mechanical proliferation – feminine forms for nineteenth-century aesthetics.

Stieglitz's 'Pictorial Photography' (1899) provides key points for this position. On the one hand, the use of photography toward plastic expression is associated with aesthetic judgement executed by the fiat of an aesthetic elite. In this amateur but dedicated practice, a single negative can produce a variety of singular, unique prints. On the other hand, the professional use of photography toward mechanical reproduction produces a proliferation of identical prints which are "stiff", and "characterless". Photography's power is that while it may be used to produce prints in "quantity", it is open to qualitative differences.[9]

The antipathy to identical repetition and to proliferation is also registered in the description of the non-artistic amateurism of the general public, which has produced "millions of photographs" to the disrepute of photographic art.[10] Against the strictures of professional and straight photography, the platinum and gum processes offer "almost unlimited" power of plasticity, so that the field of pictorial photography is "practically unlimited", other than by its own laws of taste, subject, and composition.[11] The proliferation of photographs is connected to the social mass, the superior and singular

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[8] Stieglitz, 'A Plea', p. 181, n. 2, p. 220.
[9] Alfred Stieglitz, 'Pictorial Photography' (1899), in Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays*, 1980, p. 120. The denigration of the commercial is reiterated by Dorothea Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer*, New York: Aperture, 1960, p. 49.
[10] Stieglitz, 'Pictorial Photography', p. 117.
[11] Ibid., pp. 119-120, p. 122.

print to the expressive individual.[12] The difference between the mechanical and the photographic is precisely an issue of relation to the universal, an opposition which is implicitly gendered by the femininity of the "tangible" materiality of the "mechanically made" and the animating force of "intangible" paternal "sprit".[13] The affirmation of spiritual craft determined by paternal judgement is an attempt to masculinise photography: the paternity of the singular print logically feminises avatars of infinite repetition – mechanical photography, the social mass.

Nevertheless, the relation between singularity and plethora is more complex than this might suggest. In a 1921 catalogue, Stieglitz described the singularisation of prints through contingent causes, and archival depletion through historical attrition:

> Many of my prints exist in one example only. Negatives of the early work have nearly all been lost or destroyed. [...] Every print I make, even from one negative, is a new experience, a new problem. For, unless I am able to vary – add – I am not interested. There is no mechanicalisation, but always photography. My ideal is to achieve the ability to produce numberless prints from each negative, prints all aesthetically alive, yet indistinguishably alike, and to be able to circulate them at a price not higher than that of a popular magazine or even a daily paper.[14]

Given Stieglitz's elitism, and the reticence in exhibiting work for a philistine public, this statement is laughably suspect, and the ascetic, self-mythifying road of the seer was one whose telos was not reached.[15] If this suggests some kind of idealistic rapprochement

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[12] "The American has a vote, therefore he thinks he must have an opinion. Unfortunately he has an opinion and unfortunately, I sometimes think, he has a vote. The American is superficial, and he lacks deeper feeling. I as an American have a right to say this, for I have lived a life which has given me the opportunity to test and Judge." Alfred Stieglitz to W. Orison Underwood (30.14.1918), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 198. See also: "there seems to be millions on millions of photographers & billions of photographs made annually but how rare a really fine photograph seems to be." Alfred Stieglitz to Edward Weston (03.09.1938), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 218.

[13] Alfred Stieglitz to James Soby (19.01.1942), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 216.

[14] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, pp. 128-9.

[15] See Alfred Stieglitz to Peter Henry Emerson (09.10.1933), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 215. This is not to say that there isn't a certain kind of 'democratic' tendency in Stieglitz's thought. See Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*,

with the mass market, what it marks is the priority of expressive control, and the resistance of mechanical reproduction to such affect. While images in *Camera Work* were photogravures, mechanical copies, the attention to their production and their mode of presentation owes more to craft than mass production, existing as an extension of the fetishisation of the print into the sphere of mechanical reproduction, an attempt to restrain its proliferation.[16] Yet the physical delicacy – the empirical finitude – of the prints, the work's literal mark of preciousness and uniqueness, requires protection and preservation, is thus what also announces the necessity of its archivisation.

Note 2 – The Archival Status of *Camera Work*: the Repository of a Masculine Encounter with the Infinite.

Sekula's note, in 'The Invention of Photographic Meaning' (1975), on *Camera Work* as "an artwork in its own right", images a "monumental container for smaller, subordinate works" through which framing device Stieglitz established and defined a genre of photographic practice.[17] In this sense *Camera Work* is also an archival form – of intangible spirit which in Strand's affirmation of Stieglitz is unarchivable in any

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p. 131, p. 158. The clouds of the equivalents are described as being "there for everyone – no tax as yet on them – free." What this aestheticised form of democracy entails, however, is a retraction from the political sphere. It is a sense of equality which is also registered in his assertion of the equivalence of art-works against the hierarchisation of art-media, in which "all true things are equal to each other" – a universal equivalence that can only be registered through the power of masculine creativity.

[16] The claim is made in reference to another exhibition: "with the exception of about 20 gravures which are in their way originals, only *original prints*" were shown. Alfred Stieglitz to Ernst Juhl (06.01.1911), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 192. See also, for the editorial stance on photogravure, Alfred Stieglitz, 'Our Plates' (1913), in Alfred Stieglitz (ed.), *Camera Work* No. 42/43 1913, in Jonathon Green (ed.), *Camera Work: A Critical Anthology*, New York: Aperture, 1973, p. 269. Compare "[m]y work might be reproduced if properly interpreted, that is, the spirit might be preserved. Of course, some of the things can't possibly be reproduced [...]" – Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 168. In this sense, the publication "stands as an almost Pre-Raphaelite celebration of craft in the teeth of industrialism", Alan Sekula, 'On the Invention of Photographic Meaning' (1975), in Victor Burgin (ed.), *Thinking Photography*, London: Macmillan, 1990, p. 93.

[17] Sekula, 'On the Invention', p. 92.

other form than photography.[18] This sense of the publication is supported by Stieglitz's notion of the unity of the codex: "[o]ne does not scatter the works of a Shakespeare over the face of the earth, page by page. Why do so in the case of the artist?"[19]

Stieglitz's emphasis on the mediated uniqueness of the photographic print conflicted with the standardising demands of the specific archive represented by the Boston museum of Fine Arts in 1923, where he resisted the slightest alteration to the dimension and matting of prints.[20] The necessity of constructing the image of tradition through the collation of photographs and texts, and the transience of exhibitions, indicates that the proper repository of tradition is the context of *Camera Work*, although Stieglitz also haphazardly and petulantly petitioned various museums to include photographic work in order to achieve recognition of photography as art and in order to maintain collections in the long term.[21] Indeed, Stieglitz's recollection of the renovation of the New York Camera Club in the 1890's, along with the instigation of *Camera Notes*, indicates the desire for an archival telos: "I had the mad idea that the Club could become the world centre of photography and eventually create a museum."[22] Unable to achieve such autonomy, the major art museums represent a pragmatic necessity for permanent storage and cultural recognition of the value of photography.

The tension between the repository of *Camera Work* and institutional archives is evident in the complex negotiation of expressive immediacy and mnemonic deferral in the writings of Marius de Zayas and others under Stieglitz's editorship. Benjamin de

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[18] Paul Strand, 'The Art Motive in Photography', *The British Journal of Photography*, October 5th, 1923, p. 612.
[19] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 209.
[20] Ibid., pp. 135-6.
[21] For the relations between Stieglitz and the major museums, and other forms of storage, see Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 51, p. 142, pp. 150-151, pp. 154-5, p. 161, pp. 188-9, p. 208.
[22] Ibid., p. 43.

Casseres' 1911 writing explicitly marks the intangibility of expression as an encounter with something which is positively infinite, and which is in itself archival.

> Imagination is the dream of the Unconscious. It is the realm of the gorgeous, monstrous hallucinations of the Unconscious. It is the hasheesh of genius. Out of the head of the artist issues all the beauty that is transferred to the canvas, but the roots of his imagination lie deeper than his personality. The soul of the genius is the safety-vault of the race, the treasure pocket of the Unconscious soul of the world. Here age after age the Secretive God stores in dreams. And the product of genius overwhelms us because it has collaborated with the Infinite.[23]

Stieglitz thus appears as a bearer of messages from the other side of the representable – and this ability of genius is, as Battersby argues, precisely the remit of masculinity.[24] The soul is the archive of the paternal absolute, of which the photograph is not the sign but the equivalent, the proper repository, and of which *Camera Work* is the form of contextualisation and circulation – it represents, against the femininity of endlessness, a 'good', masculine archive.

The secondarity of institutional archives is indicated by the role of the art-museum in De Zayas' rejection of merely formal development.

> Art is devouring Art. Conservative artists, with the faith of fanaticism, constantly seek inspiration in the museums of art. Progressive artists squeeze the last idea out of the ethnographical museums, which aught to be considered as museums of art. Both build on the past.[25]

In this mode rests Picasso – without "definite synthesis", trapped in an endless circle which only photography may evade through the tangent by which its mechanicity aids

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[23] Sekula, 'On the Invention', pp. 97-98; Benjamin De Casseres, 'The Unconscious in Art', *Camera Work* No. 36, 1911, p. 214.
[24] See Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*, London: The Women's Press, 1989, *passim*.
[25] Marius De Zayas, 'Photography', *Camera Work* No. 41, 1913, p. 264, p. 263.

"perfect consciousness".[26] De Zayas' thought is complex in terms of mnemonics: artistic imagination is degraded in comparison to the perfect consciousness of the photographic because it is "concurrent" with memory, which "does not retain the remembrance of the substantial representation of Form, but only its synthetic expression."[27] Photography, circumventing this displacement, is the materialisation of a spirit whose truth is recognised by the lineage of Plato, Aristotle, and Kant – "that *Alma Mater* which is felt vibrating in every existing thing". De Zayas thus brings photography explicitly into a tradition for which the archive, in its manifold senses, is the bad form of femininity in comparison to this bounteous mother.

De Zayas represents an antipathy to the role of memory in pre-photographic arts, and an antipathy to their archives – these represent endless formal combination, ad infinitum, without synthesis. Photography's materialisation of the relation to the absolute infinite evades such circularity, and the place of this recognition is *Camera Work.* With Stieglitz as the "midwife who brings out new ideas into the world", photography is brought to a good birth by a figure that controls the "monstrous hallucinations" emerging from the relation to the absolute.[28] The monstrous here does not have the quality of contingency designated by Kant, nor the chiasmic collapse of concepts figured in the necessary contingency of the feminine by Bennington, but its aestheticised remnant.[29]

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[26] Ibid., p. 264, p. 265.
[27] Ibid., p. 265.
[28] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 100.
[29] Geoffrey Bennington, 'R.I.P.' (1995), in Geoffrey Bennington, *Interrupting Derrida*, London: Routledge, 2000, p. 75.

Graft 4 – The Femininity of the Archival Ad Infinitum: Kant.

De Zayas' antipathy to the archives of art and the affirmation of a new art which evades retrospection, born whole as it were, intersects with the issue of the construction of philosophical system in Kant marked in the hierarchical difference between propaedeutic and encyclopaedic introductions.

Kant denigrates sciences which proceed "technically". These borrow auxiliary propositions *(lemmata)* and foreign principles *(peregrina)* from other sciences for a foundation. The principles *(domestica)* of the newly proposed doctrine are compared to existing, foreign principles in other doctrines *(peregrina).* Doctrine emerges from a relation to the discursive archive of science. Kant contrasts this mode to discourse which is architectonic. Here, philosophical system is an organic, unified, free-standing edifice which determines its own ground. Its principles, created within and internal to the system, are *principia domestica.*[30] The domesticity of the architectonic edifice is not founded on a wobbling pier of pre-existing texts, but upon its own legislative authority.

Kant expresses the procedure of the architectonic in affirming the encyclopaedic mode of introduction against the propaedeutic. This description precisely formulates an alternate attitude toward the discursive archive:

> such a system is not made possible by rummaging about and gathering up the many things that have been found during the course of inquiry, but is possible only if one is in a position to present completely [...] the formal concept of a whole that at the same time contains in itself *a priori* the principle of a complete division [...].[31]

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[30] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790, 1793), § 68, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Immanuel Kant*, Paul Guyer (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 252-3.

[31] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, First Introduction, § XI, p. 42.

The encyclopaedic introduction does not then domesticate doctrine by collating or consigning previous doctrines within the body of its text, does not archive existing doctrines within a domicile in order to domesticate itself. If the propaedeutic is grounded by an archival relation to the past, the encyclopaedic speaks as an authority grounded in a proleptic relation to the future. Kant states that:

> [i]f one regards the parts for such a possible whole as already completely given, then the division proceeds mechanically, as the consequence of mere comparison, and the whole becomes an aggregate (as cities do if, without regard to regulation, [*Policei*] a territory is divided according to the preferences of the would-be settlers). But if one can and should presuppose the idea of a whole in accordance with a certain principle prior to the determination of the parts, then the division must proceed scientifically [...].[32]

The order is as follows: the *a priori* rule of critique subsequently brings the system into the form of doctrine, just as judgement proceeds from the rule to the particular example. Kant thus mediates the proleptic dictates of critique with the archival dictates of doctrine. The purpose of the third critique is to unify the encyclopaedic and propaedeutic, yet their priority is clear.

Just as judgement presupposes the whole, judgement behaves "as if" *(als ob)* the domain of Nature is influenced by the laws of reason. This presupposition circumvents endlessness, as Bennington indicates: "[g]eneral logic cannot contain rules for judgement, because [...] we would need a rule to teach the application of rules to cases [...] *ad infinitum.* Judgement can only be an innate capacity, a talent or natural gift which cannot be taught". Such judgement, evading its emasculation by endlessness, is attached to the natural gift of masculine genius.[33]

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[32] Ibid., p. 47.
[33] Bennington, 'R.I.P.', p. 68. See Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, pp. 76-7.

In the topography of critical philosophy given in the Introduction to the third critique, the metaphor of the gulf between the "domain" of Nature and Freedom expresses the pure opposition between the sensible and supersensible, contingent and necessary.[34] Within the territory of cognition, empirical concepts have a domestic "residence" *(domicilium, Aufenthalt)* in nature, but not a domain. In their lawfully generated empiricity, they are contingent rather than necessary, particular rather than universal, and hence not legislative.[35] The domestic scene is deprived of giving the law; rather, it receives it. Deprived of the power of judgement, empirical knowledge is within the infinite "labyrinth of the multiplicity of possible empirical particular laws."[36] To the extent that they proceed technically, propaedeutically, they are archival discourses. And the association between archive, endlessness, empiricity and contingency is gendered by the association of particularity and the detail in Schor's analysis of aesthetics.[37] Architectonic metaphysics, unlike the mechanical production of empirical concepts, is figured as the product of a natural birth.

Bennington indicates the 'Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that Will be Able to Come Forward as a Science', where metaphysics is the "favourite child" of the "natural predisposition of our reason" and is thus opposed to "blind chance" and "arbitrary choice".[38] In this sense, the future is assured against feminine traits. Such a birth is lodged in the metaphorical structure of the third critique. In discussing the

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[34] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, Introduction, § I, pp. 61-3. Bennington provides a lucid diagram of this topography, and a complex argument concerning the law of nature and femininity in its analysis of the monstrous birth of the future – upon which this section is dependent for its extension in terms of the issue of the domicile as a site of archival femininity. See Bennington, 'R.I.P.', pp. 69-75.
[35] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, Introduction, § I, pp. 61-2.
[36] Ibid., First Introduction, § V, p. 17.
[37] Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, New York and London: Methuen, 1987, *passim.*
[38] Bennington, 'R.I.P.', p. 66.

autogenic growth of natural objects, Kant notes that the growth of a plant has a dual function: to preserve itself as a species. Given a freedom from external causes, this generation is "unceasing", and the plant grows as it should – a unified, organic totality of its parts – according to its internal necessity.[39] The social corollary defines the body politic as an organised being which is not merely mechanical:

> in the case of a recently undertaken fundamental transformation of a great people [*Volk*] into a state, the word organization has frequently been quite appropriately used for the institution of the magistracies, etc., and even of the entire body politic.[40]

Thus, the revolutionary application of the law of reason to the social is reflected in the archons of state law (magistracies). As a product of the *a priori* domain of freedom, the archons law comprise part of an organic entity. This posits a positive relation between moral and state law, a positive relation between experience and the archive – an extension of the Roman philosophical identification cited in Longinus.

Bennington's argument, developing from Derrida's 'Structure, Sign, and Play', concerns rather the monstrous, unknowable birth of the future – a metaphor embedded in the third critique:

> miscarriages or malformations in growth, where certain parts form themselves in an entirely new way because of chance defects or obstacles [...] and bring forth an anomalous creature [...].[41]

Internal defects may arise through chance, but is the plant's attempt to bend to the law of its internal necessity (formal growth, self-preservation) in the face of the contingent,

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[39] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, § 64, p. 244.
[40] Ibid., § 65, pp. 246-7.
[41] Ibid., § 64, p. 244.

which produces the monstrous. Likewise, in the discussion of magnitude and the sublime, an "object is monstrous if by its magnitude it annihilates the end which its concept constitutes".[42] The monstrous is defined as that which ends (forecloses) end (telos). The positive maternal form is connected to universality, necessity, and law; the negative form to particularity, contingency, and illegality.

This is to enter what Bennington presents as a devastating contradiction predicated upon conceptual dissolution, the fate of the concept, and the impression of conceptual delimitation: "to be legal, nature must be fundamentally contingent. If it is to receive the law, nature *must not* be completely necessary." Hence, nature is not simply part of the domain of the concept of nature (contingency), nor of the domain of Freedom (necessity). Rather, it "underlies the possibility of the two domains as the presupposition indispensable to their separation."[43] This might be restated: that to adhere to reason's law, nature must not receive the impress of that law. If empirical concepts have no domain, do not legislate because they are necessarily contingent, then the presupposition of the division of the domains is situated in the place of the domicile. Rather than from the legislative power of the domain, the contradiction of the law of nature emerges from the domicile, the place of the domestic, the place of the feminine. The femininity of nature is that which destabilises the very authority of the domain.[44] Femininity is not simply the finality without end of nature, nor the ad infinitum: the "position of judgement, as essentially teleological, is precisely what undermines any

[42] Ibid., § 26, p. 136.
[43] Bennington, 'R.I.P.', p. 74.
[44] If Bennington's earlier work on Kant and Hegel in terms of the concept of the frontier describes it as the necessary contingency of the political, the argument I have followed is not to define the domicile as a place, but as a figure of the impossibility of topography and logic, a figure of the destabilisation of boundary and delimitation which occurs at an internal but acentric position within the transcendental topography. See Geoffrey Bennington, 'The Frontier: Between Kant and Hegel' (1991), in Geoffrey Bennington, *Legislations: The Politics of Deconstruction*, London, New York: Verso, 1994.

clear sense of any *telos* at all for judgement by opening it to an indefinite future" (Bennington).[45]

This future, I hazard, emerges from an archival relation. In the division between technical and architectonic modes of discourse, the technical borrows foreign principles *(peregrina, lemmata)* in order to ground its indigenous principles *(principia domestica)*. The technical thus proceeds in propaedeutic mode: its foundation is upon pre-existing works – texts, an archival mode, a relation to the past. The architectonic mode builds a freestanding edifice upon a ground of its own delimitation. It proceeds in encyclopaedic mode, proleptically assuming the independent whole it delimits. Here, the voice of the law emerges not from the archive, but from the field of the supersensible in its capacity to impact upon experience. But, what emerges from Bennington's reading is the destabilisation of the difference between the domains of Nature and Freedom. What I have hazarded in addition is that this also destabilises the opposition between the domain and the domicile: the architectonic cannot be built as a unified and organic arrangement of definite parts.[46] The domicile is contradictory: a site of the collapse of the differences of the necessary and contingent, the lawful and transgressive, the good and bad birth. What critique has effectively done then is to borrow and suppress a foreign principle – the perigrina of the feminine. Logically speaking, the architectonic is presupposes a historically embedded figure of femininity which precedes the paternal

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[45] Bennington, 'R.I.P.', p. 74.

[46] De Man presents a similar effect via a very different argument. Here, the organic body of the architectonic is dismembered by aesthetic judgment itself, in that it must view the parts of the body severed from any purpose. The coherence of the body of the third critique is rather through the contingent similarity of the sound of words – the "prosaic materiality" of the letter: "Is not the persuasiveness of the entire passage on the recovery of the imagination's tranquillity after the shock of the sublime based, not so much on the little play acted out by the senses, but on the close proximity in sound, between the German words for 'surprise' and 'admiration', *Verwunderung* and *Bewunderung* ?" – the contingent and irrational reflection of language. See Paul de Man, 'Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant', in *The Textual Sublime: Deconstruction and its Differences*, Buffalo: SUNY Press, 1990, pp. 107-8.

domain: the domicile, attached to the archival authority of empirical concepts, and their ad infinitum, precedes the relative autogenesis of the architectonic.

Impression 4 – Visual Research: Untitled (Deckchair).

The precedence of the archive hazarded in Kant has its visual corollary in Stiegler's Derridean analysis of the televisual. Stiegler translates the relation between signifier and signified to that between "mental image" and "image-object", in which "there is no mental image in general, no 'transcendental imagery' that would precede the image-object [....]: the mental image is always the *return* of some image-object, its *remanence*".[47] Clearly, this is an argument that would find purchase against Conceptualism's conceptual purity, and its antipathy to the iconic mode of the photographic.

This deckchair was photographed and printed in monochrome (fig.23). The resulting grey was used to paint the original object; its fabric was replaced by the photograph of the fabric. In its abstraction it emphasises the contingent details of the exhibition space. Somewhat against space, the chair begs a view, but does not prescribe a particular view (seascape, landscape, garden, etc). But the materiality of the object is mildly complex. If you cannot sit on the pure concept 'chair', an immateriality is held in the fragility of the seat: the object does not provide the support for an imaginary survey – it does not provide leisure, a doze in respite from thought. Yet, if there is no concept without an instantiation, the seat has a definite material presence, just as the solid frame.

[47] Bernard Stiegler, 'The Discrete Image', in Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews* (1996), trans. Jennifer Bajorek, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002, pp. 147-8.

Fig.23: Sas Mays, *Untitled (Deckchair)*, installation shot (colour photograph, dimensions variable), deckchair, paint, photograph of fabric, aprx. 100 x 150 x 130 cm.

In its abstraction, it is replete with ambient reference to Conceptualism, and two specific works. Firstly, Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965-1967), designed to mark

Fig.24: Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs* (1965-67), photograph, wooden chair, photographic of dictionary definition, dimensions variable.

Fig.25: Daniel Buren, *Visible Recto Verso Painting* (1971), acrylic on canvas, 2000 x 1000 cm.

the pure autonomy of the concept from materiality, as much as it inadvertently marks the difference of concepts attached to each object (fig.24). If this marks the impossibility of the pure concept, it should be remembered that in Derridean terms, translation of meaning between languages and objects implies the autonomy of meaning from specific instantiations, and thus the impossible reappearance of the ideal. Secondly, Buren's *Visible Recto Verso Painting* (1971). If its stripes are designed to mark the between-spaces of boundaries, the canonical photograph of its installation at the Guggenheim marks their brutal centrality (fig.25). But the stripes on the deckchair have an impressionistic relation to Buren's – they are not the same width (8.7 cm). The relationship of this work to conceptual art is partly based on a vague feeling of proximity – the effect of an affect.

Paradoxically then, it is the difference of the deckchair to Conceptual art which is its proximity. But on the other hand, *Untitled – Deckchair* opposes Kosuth's conceptual purity and, in its diminution, Buren's occupation of space. It is also replete with vernacular references: photographs from tourism, leisure, the holiday snapshot – the dispersed archives of social memory. It is a materialisation of a memory constructed through photographs. In this context, it materialises the mental image of a photograph of an object, indicating the remanence of the archive.

§ 2 – Strand and Stieglitz: the Closure of the Subject.

Note 1 – Stieglitz and Strand on the Image of Femininity: an Agreement Articulated through O'Keeffe.

Something like the precedence of the archive, which defers the performance of masculine judgement and genius, would also be attendant upon De Zayas' claim to have evaded the retrospection of the archive. At the close of this chapter, an approximate sense of the domicile as a place of categorical collapse will mark the Kantianism of Stieglitz's appropriation of the sublime within the domestic milieu. In Strand's early writing, however, Stieglitz appears as the archon of a tradition based in the intuition of the absolute and the penetration of the veil of specifically feminine mystery – of a kind figured by Kant through Isis.[48] But despite this early agreement, Strand appears as the archivist of the radical impenetrability of the veil of a generalised individual idiosyncrasy.

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[48] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, § 49, p. 194 – where a footnote on Segner's temple-text metaphor includes the "most sublime" description of the of veiled nature. The maternal is neutralised typographically: "**Isis** (Mother **Nature**)" – between mythic figure and rational concept. Times here represents the standard *Fraktur* font; bold represents the spacing of *Fettdruck*, italics the *Roman* type reserved for foreign words (*peregrina*).

The archival status of *Camera Work* is a point repeatedly marked in Strand's key writings, which affirm their filiation to the paternal lineage of Stieglitz in precisely archival terms. 'Photography and the New God' (1922) affirms that the importance of *Camera Work* lies less in its aesthetic, expressive dimension, and more in its "historical sense" – it represents the "crystallization" of the purely photographic.[49] In 'The Art Motive in Photography' (1923), the publication is the only "complete record" containing "the whole" of this tradition, to which there is "no other access".[50] But, according to pictorialist photographers' lack of critical thought, Stieglitz, because of his faith in the medium, is heroically burdened by the preservation of "thousands of numbers" of *Camera Work*, which are unsold and "left to rot on his hands". These accumulations

> lie idle to-day in storage vaults, in cellars, clutter up shelves [...]. That he has not destroyed them is a miracle. But he continues to preserve them as well as the collection of photographs representing this past development of photography, the only collection of its kind in existence, and most of which he purchased – all this he preserves perhaps, because he has faith in photography.[51]

Stieglitz's archival accumulation is here produced by the deferral of recognition, rather than an accumulation which itself defers synthesis, yet as a "physical and financial" burden, such accumulation also has a deleterious effect: it may divert, displace, or defer energies from the task of photography. In this sense, archival accumulation defers telos, indicating the emasculating possibility of the superlative form of deferral – the ad infinitum.

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[49] Paul Strand, 'Photography and the New God', p. 147, p. 149.
[50] Strand, 'The Art Motive', p. 612, p. 613.
[51] Ibid., p. 613. For Stieglitz's overprinting, see also Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 116.

Although their separation was already in place by the time of the last edition of *Camera Work* in 1917, Strand's proximity to Stieglitz at the time of 'The Art Motive in Photography' (1923) is marked in a number of references and intersection. If the quality of Stieglitz's portraits suggest the hypnotisation of the sitter, this effect, Strand implies, will also be relevant to the clouds of the equivalents – he exhorts: "find out whether his hypnotic powers extend to the elements".[52] Wholly within the rhetoric of the fetishisation of the print, Strand is enmeshed within "the discourse situation established around the unique image in *Camera Work*" which "is prefigured historically in the folklore that surrounded the Daguerreotype"; part of which included the way in which "women were commonly held to feel their eyes 'drawn' toward the lens".[53] Strand's affirmation collapses femininity and nature into the eye's conquest.

The early filiation between Stieglitz and Strand is marked in the latter's 'Georgia O'Keeffe' (1924), in which the opposition of the masculine and feminine is hierarchised by embedded gender values.[54] Masculine art, embodied by MacDonald Wright, is driven by "intellect"; feminine art, embodied by O'Keeffe, is driven by "immediate experience": "Wright moves from conscious concept toward experience; O'Keeffe works from the unconscious to the conscious".[55] While O'Keeffe is given access to the "philosophical", it is a secondary aspect through which proximity to masculine values can be achieved.[56] In idiosyncratic difference from the generality of women, O'Keeffe

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[52] Ibid., p. 615.
[53] Sekula, 'On the Invention', pp. 93-4.
[54] Paul Strand, 'Georgia O'Keeffe' (c.1924). The actual date of publication is questionable – hence quotations and page references are from an unpublished manuscript mailed by Strand to the editor of *The Playboy* (Egmont Arens) on 17.01.1924, which is held in the Special Collections of the Centre for Creative Photography, Tucson Arizona USA.
[55] Strand, 'Georgia O'Keeffe', p. 6, p. 7. The latter text, unclearly amended by Strand, may also read "moves from consciousness and concept".
[56] Ibid., p. 8.

becomes closer to the masculine. The communicability of O'Keeffe's individuality is marked where her work

> suggests that despite the perils of self-division women have indeed set out upon a search for their own particular Grail. Georgia O'Keeffe is one who has set out, who has closed the breech in herself by releasing in her work the deepest experiences of her search.[57]

There is, then, a dialectical relationship between individuality and communicability. But an understanding of the implications of Strand's relations to the infinites will drive a wedge between Strand and Stieglitz precisely over the relation to the feminine. Simply put, what the camera records or archives for Stieglitz is an emotional experience whose ineffability is the mark of its relation to the absolute, whereas for Strand the photograph records an absolute yet worldly singularity which cannot in itself be accessed. This difference is significantly played out through the feminine as a photographic subject.

Note 2 – The Humanisation of the Industrial Machine: the Social Role of Photography.

'Photography and the New God' (1922) presents Strand's historical sense: photography is a redemptive practice by which to control the excesses of technological capital; a force naturalised as the expression of innate desire for the unknown.[58] In 'Photography' (1917) the description of photographic objectivity involves "honesty" in the "respect" for the object, which is "expressed in terms of chiaroscuro [...] through a range of almost infinite tonal values which lie beyond the skill of human hand."[59]

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[57] Ibid., p. 10.
[58] Strand, 'Photography and the New God', p. 144.
[59] Paul Strand, 'Photography' (1917), in Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays*, p. 142.

Strand's humanisation of technology indicates a pastoralising bent in which expression controls detail – like the ills of capital, detail must be contained by synthetic transcendence.[60] Positive technological potential lies in photography's humanising synthesis of technology and expression, objectivity and subjectivity, within which the field of experimentation is "limitless, inexhaustible".[61] Strand evades the impossible questions of "what art is or God or all the other abstractions" and opens onto infinite views of worldly objects, and infinite technical and compositional interpretations of those negatives.[62] This states an exchange of theological indeterminacies for those infinite possibilities of human, worldly expression.

Since expressive photography can only be attained via a critical perspective on photographic tradition, and since photography is positioned at the forefront of specifically social salvation, the pathos of the singular and neglected archive of *Camera Work* is clear.[63] The limitlessness of photography is in service of the positive infinite (change beyond change), while the failure of cultural thought to accede to it is cast in terms which gesture toward the archival ad infinitum. Indeed, given Strand's negative view of human development in other areas, in which the failure "to learn much from either the blunders or the wisdom of the past", and "[h]ence the war", means that the

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[60] But the relation between Strand's infamous series of candid portraits and infinite detail is complex. The original negatives were small, and had to be transferred to eleven by fourteen inch copy-negatives so that platinotype could be used as a paper (its low sensitivity meant that it couldn't be used with an enlarger), itself necessary in the way it "obscured fine detail, or the lack of it". Richard Benson, 'Print Making', in Maren Stange, (ed.), *Paul Strand: Essays on his Life and Work*, New York: Aperture, 1990, p. 104. The apparent sharpness of the image is dependent upon a series of technical mediations and displacements which give the impression of detail not through actual definition, but through tonal contrast.

[61] Strand, 'Photography', p. 615.

[62] Strand, 'The Art Motive', p. 614.

[63] Ibid., p. 612.

photographic aesthetic becomes a histrionically privileged form of escape from such repetition.[64]

Readings of Strand's relation to the social effectively polarise around Weaver and Sekula. For Weaver, Strand's reception of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, and Bergsonian vitalism through Stieglitz's association with D.H. Lawrence and Havelock Ellis, is the thesis of a kind of dialectical materialism which mediates the antithesis of mechanism. In this mediation, the influence of Lukàcs' concepts of partisanship, typicality, and totality is asserted on Strand's ideas of "taking sides", "specificity", and "dimensionality".[65] Weaver maintains the tension of Strand's practice in underlining the statement that "objects may be organized to express the causes of which they are the effects, or to create an emotion unrelated to the objectivity as such".[66]

Sekula's peremptory dismissal, which excises Strand from a relation to Hine and to the sociological, is played out through Benedetto Croce's *Aesthetic* (1901); and in this idealism the quintessence of intuition is opposed to concept, philosophy, and history. For Sekula, this is the sign of a polemical relation to the "Kantian separation of the aesthetic idea from conceptual knowledge and interest".[67] Sekula quotes Strand's rebuff to Croce in 'Photography and the New God' as a submission to idealist aesthetics in which: "[t]he 'element of nature' is eradicated by denying the representational status of the photograph".[68] This appears to singularise the ambivalence of Strand's practice concerning the relation between expression and objectivity. Strand's discourse of the humanisation of capital and technology and the total control over the machine would

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[64] Ibid., p. 613.
[65] Mike Weaver, 'Dynamic Realist', in Stange, *Paul Strand*, p. 201.
[66] Ibid., p. 197.
[67] Sekula, 'On the Invention', p. 102.
[68] Ibid., p. 103; Strand, 'Photography and the New God', pp. 150-1.

support such a reading, but the camera cannot evade the objects before it: the element of nature is not entirely eradicated, but holds a specific position within Strand's sense of "pure synthesis".[69] Trachtenberg's recognition that *Time in New England* (1950) effectively reiterates a liberal-individualist pastoralism – which is present in Horak's reading of *Manhatta* (1921) – does suggest an idealism which would be proximate to Sekula.[70] Here, technology, and thus the objective dimension, would be subjugated to nature and expression. Nevertheless, such continuities would need to be compared to Strand's problematic socio-political involvements – for example: in the Photo League.

Note 3 – The Reiteration and Transformation of the Figure of the Recess: Strand's Difference from Stieglitz.

The tension between expression and objectivity is reduplicated at the level of the photographic subject where Stephen Bann enlists Michael Fried's opposition between absorption and theatricality in 'Erased Physiognomy'. Referring to Géricault's monomania studies, the subject's retraction into an inner world is associated to the sense of "primary document", which may be transgressed by the interpolations of the "secondary document": what is objective is what is recessed from the viewer. For Fried, these concepts emerge through Disdéri where carte de visite photography must resist its implicit relation to the theatrical – its production of a consciousness directed toward the photographic event, which replaces the sense of person with that of an actor.[71] Bann's selection of an image prior to commercial, contractual relations between photographer

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[69] Strand, 'Photography and the New God', p. 149.
[70] Alan Trachtenberg, 'Introduction'; Jan-Christopher Horak, 'Modernist Perspectives and Romantic Impulses: *Manhatta*', in Stange, *Paul Strand*, p. 8, p. 14, p. 15; p. 69, p. 70, p. 71.
[71] Stephen Bann, 'Erased Physiognomy: Théodore Géricault, Paul Strand and Gary Winogrand', in Graham Clarke (ed.), *The Portrait in Photography*, London: Reaktion, 1992, p. 33.

and sitter in the carte de visite period, is instructive: a Talbot photograph of his own mother as a mark of "absorptive autonomy" and hence the "representation of otherness".[72] In its own way, Bann's selection reiterates the figure of recessed femininity with which I have shown Talbot's discourse to be permeated. 'Absorption' should thus be read as 'retraction', a figure of the recess. Bann appears to be staking a period of photography that is relatively free from the formalisations of painting and relatively uncontaminated by the contracts of capital. This, surely, is erroneous; but it indicates is that the recess may also be a figure precisely of that ideology. If Bann enlists absorption as a sign of distance from the social organisations of capital, Strand, perhaps, represents the inversion of the figure of the recess as a positive expression of bourgeois individualism.

Fig.26: Paul Strand, *Blind Woman* (1916), photogravure.

[72] Bann, 'Erased Physiognomy', pp. 33-4.

In Strand's series of candid portraits, the rhetoric of objectivity is enabled by the subject's lack of recognition of being viewed, by lack of returned gaze – an effective blindness. Hence, *Blind Woman* (1916) is the meta-image of the series, the "ultimate absorptive subject" (fig.26). Even though Strand had already moved on from this shooting style by the time of its publication in the last double issue of *Camera Work* in 1917, the "quasi-sociological title" of *Young Boy, Gondeville, Charente, France* (1951) encounters the logic of the recess. Strand's intention of searching for the "essence of rural life" dissolves as Bann telescopes in from title to image, localising, from nation to un-named figure who meets the gaze (fig.27).

Fig.27: Paul Strand, *Young Boy, Gondeville, France* (1951), gelatin silver print.

This shift, from the geo-social to the ontological, is comparable to Stieglitz's description of the photographic event of *The Steerage*, in its movement from the social to the expressive. In Sekula's reading of this description, the expressive effectively obliterates the social. For Bann, the subject's consciousness of portraiture enforces the desire not to give anything away, to remain recessed: "it is the excess of unknowable physiognomy over the signs of status, the self-manifestation of a body refusing to be read, that constitutes the special effect of authenticity."[73] But this affirmation of the objective status of the photograph is merely the obverse of Strand's own liberal individualism, preacher as he was of the absolutely idiosyncratic "one way" of each photographer's development, and its "endless" negotiation.[74] Strand's affirmation of singularity is double edged – it also imitates Stieglitz: its particularity dissolves into generality, or rather, it is a logical contradiction from which there is no escape. Each affirmation of singularity is instantly generalised; each generalisation is instantly particularised.[75] Strand offers, if anything, an inversion of Kant: rather than the ideality of agreement in the sensus communis, Strand offers a community founded on the mutual recognition of the ontological condition of infinite difference – absolute impenetrability, incommunicability, recess and closure.[76] At this moment the absolute singularity of the sitter and the absolute singularity of the photographer collapse into each other into an

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[73] Ibid., p. 45.
[74] Strand, 'The Art Motive', pp. 614-5.
[75] The contradiction is similar to that in de Man's analysis of Hegel, where the 'I' is at once the most particular and general grammatical form of the subject, so that the 'I' cannot be articulated as either. See Paul de Man, 'Sign and Symbol in Hegel's *Aesthetics*' (1982), Paul de Man, Aesthetic Ideology, Andrzej Warminski (ed.), Theory and History of Literature, Vol. 65, Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 98. For Strand the problematic of identity appears to work like this: the absolute singularity of the photographer is expressed by its identification with the absolute retraction of the subject, which indicates the impossibility of that identification. Which means that like Hegel, as de Man argues, '*I* cannot say I'.
[76] Oddly, Strand's sense of straight objectivity is grounded in an extension and transformation of the very figure by which Talbot characterised the failure of optical penetration.

indifferentiation whose medium is the projection of Strand's ideology onto the object. This collapse is at the same time the affirmation of the radical separation of viewer and viewed. Given this radically isolating indifferentiation, perhaps another way of describing the 1951 photograph, as much as that of 1916, is as a theatrics of retraction – another point where the difference of the oppositions collapse.

Note 4 – Stein and O'Keeffe: the Disclosure of the Feminine in Positive and Negative Forms.

Despite their early filiation, the later Strand affirms the absolute retraction of the subject; Stieglitz the absolute disclosure of the feminine to the paternal survey. In an inversion of the general sense that Strand supersedes Stieglitz's pictorialism, offering Stieglitz the future of objectivity, from Stieglitz's position, Strand will appear as the modern form of an obsolete historical thought.

In a response to Macdonald Wright in 1919, Stieglitz indicates a cultural history in which the feminine has been subject to the masculine. In this state, the position of the feminine is complex: both shackled by masculine culture and power, but also existing as a "sphinx" which "had *her* secret".[77] This, then, may be a figure of the control of feminine difference, but it nevertheless remains as something which cannot quite be appropriated. Kant's figure of Isis is not an inappropriate, if problematic analogy. This historical position of the feminine is figured in Stieglitz's relation to Gertrude Stein. Spellbound by Leo Stein's philosophy of art in 1909, Gertrude Stein appears nameless and unidentified in Stieglitz's account:

[77] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 122.

> what was most remarkable about the visit to Stein was the woman. She had appeared to understand everything the man said and oftentimes smiled a knowing smile. But she never spoke a word [....] wreathed in a sort of semi-Mona Lisa smile.[78]

The account effectively contrasts this mute, secretive feminine indeterminacy to the clear and definite image of masculine aesthetic authority.[79] Stein was identified in name between 1911 and 1912, when Stieglitz, presented with Stein's manuscripts, accepted them for publication in *Camera Work* without full reading or comprehension – Stein's secret maintained, even in the reception of the edition by others as "gibberish".[80]

Stieglitz emphasised sexual difference in the "elemental feeling" of artistry: "[t]he Woman receives the World through her Womb. That is the seat of her deepest feeling. Mind comes second".[81] As indicated by Barbara Lynes, reviews of a 1924 exhibition of O'Keeffe and Stieglitz polarised reception between "intuitive" painting and "intellectual" photography, the latter being a traditionally masculine attribute.[82] Thus, sexual difference is employed in a sublimated and aestheticised extension of social subjection.

But the 1919 letter also indicates a historical shift from subjection, a sublimating shift from childbearing to aesthetic production, in which O'Keeffe represents the first aesthetic form of unshackled expression.[83] Expressive communication effectively

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[78] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 88, p. 89. That O'Keeffe, like Stein, is described as having a Mona Lisa smile, and retracting from explaining pictures to Stieglitz indicates that the laying bare of the feminine is not an issue of character. See Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 112.
[79] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 88.
[80] Ibid., p. 89. The piece on Picasso is structured by a series of tautologies and deviations, gendered and neutered references, and the issue of bringing forth – engendering – meaning. See Gertrude Stein, 'Pablo Picasso', *Camera Work* Special Number, 1912, pp. 223-5.
[81] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, pp. 120-2.
[82] Barbara Lynes, 'Georgia O'Keeffe and Feminism', in Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (eds.), *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1992, p. 445.
[83] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 122.

eradicates the feminine secret, feminine difference, in this process. In Stieglitz's view, O'Keeffe reveals the hidden secret of femininity to the male gaze: in a 1916 *Camera Work* review, her work was "of intense interest from a psycho-analytical point of view. '291' had never before seen a woman express herself so frankly on paper."[84] On seeing her work for the first time, Stieglitz responded: "[f]inally a woman on paper. A woman gives herself."[85] Following Stieglitz's biological essentialism, Paul Rosenfeld reiterated this inversion of feminine interiority in the description of her work as "living and shameless private documents" – that is: as absolute disclosure.[86] The very affirmation of O'Keeffe as a sign of the aesthetic freedom of the feminine, within the terms of Stieglitz's discourse, affirms the primacy of the masculine in its homogenisation of gender:

> if these Woman produced things which are distinctly feminine can live side by side with male produced Art – hold their own – we will find that the underlying aesthetic laws governing the one govern the other – the original generating feeling merely being different.[87]

Whitney Chadwick indicates that existing as the legitimation of Stieglitz's aesthetic principles, O'Keeffe-as-protégée "legitimises male authority and male succession", perpetuating masculine filiation.[88] Chadwick's socio-historical contextualisation also indicates the declining birth-rates of the 1920's.[89] In this sense, the relative freedom of women from child-bearing, and the possibility of sublimated creation, appears to be mirrored by the relative freedom of feminine aesthetic expression described by Stieglitz,

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[84] Cited in Lynes, B. 'O'Keeffe and Feminism', p. 439.
[85] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 111.
[86] Cited in Lynes, 'O'Keeffe and Feminism', p. 440.
[87] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, pp. 122-3.
[88] Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2002, p. 306.
[89] Ibid.

but on the other hand, the homogenisation and laying bare of the feminine reduces its concept to one of paternal control, and rather represents an extension of such control into the spheres newly opened to women.

In general, the singularisations and determinations of aesthetic judgement are specifically masculine. The metaphysical ramifications of this shift are indicated by De Zayas's commentary on photography in art history: "the more convinced we are that it has come to draw away the veil of mystery with which art enveloped the represented Form"; and hence "[w]e could make a Colossus of Rhodes, but not the Sphinx."[90] De Zayas proclaims the aesthetic apex of a cultural shift in the relation to feminine nature indicated in its scientific form by Davy at the start of the nineteenth century: "The skirt only of the veil which conceals [...] mysterious and sublime processes has been lifted up, and the grand view is as yet unknown".[91]

By 1918, Stieglitz's photographic work changed: with ultra-sharp rendition down to facial pores, particularity is encapsulated within a totalising framework, the images being "clean-cut, heartfelt bits of universality in the shape of a woman".[92] Hence, the historical shift outlined by Stieglitz is played out in the relation between the figures of Stein and O'Keeffe, and in visual rhetoric. In the shift from pictorial to straight photography Stieglitz combines Strand's sharpness with an erotic mode of containing its detail.[93] At the level of the individual photograph, endless detail is contained by the

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[90] De Zayas, 'Photography', p. 266, p. 263. The sphinx, in the history of aesthetics, is associated to the 'bad' sublime identified in Burke and Rousseau – see Paul Mattick, 'Beautiful and Sublime: "Gender Totemism" in the Constitution of Art', in Peggy Brand and Carolyn Korsmeyer (eds.), *Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, p. 43.

[91] Cited in Brian Elsea, *Fathering the Unthinkable: Masculinity, Scientists and the Nuclear Arms Race*, London: Pluto Press, 1983, p. 28.

[92] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 119.

[93] The masculine eroticism of the equivalent is indicated Stieglitz's response to a female gallery visitor who did not have an immediate, intuitive relation to John Marin's paintings, and who requested explanation, in

privilege of shape, and at the level of the organisation of images, their fragmentation of the body is contained by the rhetoric of universality; and visually, infinite detail is controlled by erotic form – the mode of containment of infinite detail in Weston.

§ 3 – Weston: the Erotic Containment of the Infinites.

Note 1 – The Pacification of Feminine Forms: Infinite Detail and Woman.

In Weston's thought from 1924, represented by 'Seeing Photographically', the "integrity" and "honesty" of the photograph is distinguished from the painterly and pictorialist by an invisible "mosaic" of "tiny particles", which being phenomenally unsegmented, give an "amazing precision of definition, especially in the recording of fine detail; and [...] the unbroken sequence of infinitely subtle gradations from black to white."[94] Weston's attachment to the Daguerrean detail transforms its epistemological containment into the erotics of an individualistic and asocial subjectivism.[95] McGrath intersects with the discourse of infinite detail in the association between Weston's love of the Daguerreotype and a desire for "mythic one-ness" between the photograph and the 'real', a desire to collapse signifier and signified against the separations of the negative-positive process; in which the microscopic detail and telescopic depth of minimum aperture (f/64) is attached to objectivity in its invocation and retraction from the haptic – this latter being attached to the eroticising, fetishising, masturbatory drive.[96]

1936. Norman's account presents Stieglitz's articulated, embedded, and traditional thinking as itself a mark of the immediate: "Before Stieglitz quite realizes what he is saying, he replies, 'Can you tell me this: Why don't you give me an erection ?'." Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p.185.

[94] Edward Weston, 'Seeing Photographically' (1964), in Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays*, p. 171. The Encyclopaedia text reiterates the key concerns of a pamphlet written for the Los Angeles Museum in 1934 – see Maddow, *Edward Weston*, pp. 256-7.

[95] Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 16, p. 18.

[96] See Roberta McGrath, 'Re-reading Edward Weston – Feminism, Photography and Psychoanalysis' (1987), in Heron and Williams, *Illuminations*, pp. 266-7.

Containment of the ad infinitum is also evident in determinate judgements made within the infinite technical possibilities of the medium, which give the freedom to alter the registration of "relative values in the negative" to whatever extent of departure from "literal recording".[97] These are, then, positive values accorded to the ad infinitum, but only to the extent that it is an indeterminate field upon which determinate meaning can be imposed: its excess must be contained. A proximate mode of containment is evident where the relation between the photographer and the world of objects involves "an infinite number of varied compositions with a single, stationary subject". Infinite technical possibilities need to be curtailed by pictorial aims – by limiting the actual repertoire of technical possibility and its gadgets; otherwise, the circular repetition of "an endless squirrel cage chase" or the indeterminate wandering of a "maze of technical information" ensues.[98] Indeterminacy must be controlled by the photographer through mastery of craft.

> Until the photographer has learned to visualize his final result in advance, and to predetermine the procedure necessary to carry out that visualization, his finished work (if it be photography at all) will present a series of lucky – or unlucky – mechanical accidents.[99]

Control of technique opens onto infinite purity: the honesty of photography probes beyond the superfice, looking "deeply into the nature of things [...] their basic reality [...] the essence".[100] Each previsualisation must be singular, not prescribed by rules of generality. Weston's thought is thus permeated by a discourse in which the ad infinitum

[97] Weston, 'Seeing Photographically', p. 173.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., p. 172.
[100] Ibid., p. 174.

of technology must be given telos by individualism, within a context in which mastery of craft is positioned specifically against contingency.

In these descriptions, 'Seeing Photographically' is a text devoid of explicit references to the gendering of such terms, and although they are historically gendered, the purpose of this section of is to determine their gender from within Weston's discourse – through the diaries through which Weston attempted to control the reception of the images: the *Daybooks* (1961, 1966). If the production of photographs has relations to the ad infinitum, so too does their reception:

> I see only that form or force which was my original stimulus. [....] The peppers which are more libelled than anything I have done, – in them has been found vulvas, penises or combinations, sexual intercourse, madonna with child, wrestlers, modern sculpture, African carving, ad nauseam, according to the state of mind of the spectator. [....] I have done perhaps fifty negatives of peppers: because of the endless variety in form manifestations [...]. A box of peppers at the corner grocery store holds implications to stir me emotionally more than almost any other edible form, for they run the gamut of all natural forms, in experimental surprises.[101]

Like Strand's *Blind Woman*, the pepper is the meta-symbol that contains the heterogeneity and particularity of natural objects – an appearance of the universal, limiting an ad infinitum within a logic of constraint (fig.28).[102] Where Weston disparages the endlessness of literal visualisation, stating against "penistic insinuations"

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[101] Cited in Judith Freyer Davidov, *Women's Camera Work: Self / Body / Other in American Visual Culture*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1998, pp. 340-1.

[102] Maddow's assertion that the formal origin of these monolithic images lies in the early close-ups of Mexican toys, while disparaging the emotional value of such models of something else, indicates that the formal aspect of the peppers originates in the diminutive, simulated, and infantile. Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 58. But the continued infantalism of Weston's practice in the 'mature' period of the peppers is endorsed where Weston's propensity to eat his subjects is connected to Irigaray's reading of Freud's 'Three essays on Sexuality': "in the childish imaginary [...] 'People get babies by eating some particular thing [...] and babies are born through the bowel like a discharge of faeces'". Weston's photographs would thus represent the symbolic substitution of the faecal baby. See Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 36.

the formal quality of "the great diagonal cutting the plate", it is clear that the ad infinitum of other subjective literalisations is being degraded in comparison to the singular emotive thrust of the formal dimension. Given that the ad infinitum will be seen to be coded as feminine in its various avatars in Weston's practice, such interpolations are similarly coded. What is being affirmed is masculine judgement in its singularisation from the infinity of possible forms and viewpoints – Weston excises the interpretive appropriation of the photograph in the name of further endlessness.

Fig.28: Edward Weston, *Pepper No. 30* (1930), gelatin silver print, 23.5 x 18.4 cm.

McGrath indicates that such judgements operate partly through the excisions of the frame. Excision marks the appropriation of the feminine, in which nature is the passive raw material for transformation into masculine culture.

> Enjoyment of the nudes is ensured through the erasure of the threatening gaze of the woman, either through literal beheading, aversion or covering of the eyes […]. The denial to look is also, by implication the denial of women's access to the production of knowledge.[103]

Again, in Stack's account, formal arrangements "decide to exclude the contingency of a frontal encounter".[104] In philosophical rather than psychoanalytic terms, the excision indicates the eradication of the particular (this woman) and the affirmation of the universal (the masculine image of feminine nature). Such neutralisation would be registered in Weston's sense of the bull-ring as "blank sheet of paper" for reception of "shocking sensuality" or "aesthetic refinement" via "symbolic pageantry".[105] This blankness, like unexposed photographic negative and paper, is a neuter substrate for the imposition of formalising vision (fig.29).

Fig.29: Edward Weston, *Bertha Wardell* (1927), gelatin silver print.

[103] McGrath, 'Re-reading Edward Weston', p. 267, p. 269.
[104] Trudy Wilner Stack, 'An Appetite for the Thing Itself: Studio Vegetables and Female Nudes', in Gilles Mora (ed.), *Edward Weston: Forms of Passion*, New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1995, p. 140.
[105] Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 47.

But the excision of the feminine gaze is not necessarily a mark of an oppressive paternalism, though this affirmation requires something of an exit from the terms of Weston's discourse. In archival terms, there may be a positive valorisation to the refusal to record particularity as a mode of protection: for Bataille, the belly laugh of the acephalus represents the attempt to resist the inscription of Spirit, the circumvention of the rationality of the patriarch par excellence: Hegel.[106] To think the acephalus solely as the figure of castrated femininity whose marginality is at the centre of paternal discourse seems only to reiterate the figure of lack.[107]

The acephalus can be read as a slightly more problematic figure in Weston's practice. Its complex relation between intelligence and intuition indicates a mediation of thought and thoughtlessness, mind and body. What differentiates masculine and feminine in these terms is that the feminine is deprived of mediation by being confined to the somatic, and if there is a tendency in the nudes toward a headless impersonality of the universal, Weston's portraiture, landscape, and still life would require different logics of analysis. However, McGrath's analogy of dream-work and photo-work does allow for a sense in which the logical incoherence of the generality of Weston's practice is played out. Weston's assertion that "[p]hotography is peculiarly adapted to the American psyche", begs analysis of the psyché that is presented through the *Daybooks*.

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[106] See Georges Bataille, 'Propositions', and 'The Labyrinth', in Allan Stoekl (ed.), *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927 – 1939*, trans. Allan Stoekl et al, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985, p. 177, pp. 199-200.

[107] For a precise discussion of the problematic of the figure of the acephalus as liberatory and repressive, heterogenous and homogenous, of disorder and order, but, finally, 'supplementary' – both lacking and excessive, see Allan Stoekl, 'Truman's Apotheosis: Bataille, "Planisme", and Headlessness', in Allan Stoekl (ed.), *On Bataille, Yale French Studies* No.78, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, p. 182, p. 195, p. 198, p. 205. In the context of which, see Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy* Volume I (1967), trans. Robert Hurley, New York: Zone Books, 1991. For an entry into the problematic issues of gender in Bataille, particularly the role of woman as object (prostitute) and the veiling of nakedness with beauty, seduction and death, see Suzanne Guerlac, '"Recognition" by a Woman!: A Reading of Bataille's L'Eroticisme', in Stoekl, *On Bataille.*

Even given Maddow's selectivity, and Weston's anarchival burning of letters to protect the 'secret shrine' of his psyché, the antipathy registered in 'Seeing Photographically' to commerce and the purely mechanical is reiterated throughout *Edward Weston: His Life and Photographs* (1973), and in association to feminine figures.[108] Here, I am less interested in a psychoanalysis of the *Daybooks* and the photographs and more in the way that they are traversed by and record or archive a set of tropes which connect femininity, endlessness, and the mechanical.

Note 2 – Weston's Mechanical Feminisation: the Self-Differentiality of the Masculine.

The honest photograph in 'Seeing Photographically' is purely photographic; in the *Daybooks* commercial work for aged American women requires the 'dishonesty' of retouching. Working as an "automaton", being mechanised by labour, threatens order – the endless combinations of family portraiture produces psychic confusion, displacing the singular clarity and intuitive ease of creative work.[109] This latter involves the naturalising subjugation of the camera to the intuitions of desire, against the rational, brutal and calculated.[110] There is an equation of terms in their shared negative valorisation: the feminine, unphotographic dishonesty, the commercial, the mechanical. Weston's thought here intersects with the history of the sexual division of labour – retouching is associated from the nineteenth century to female workers, and their mechanisation.[111]

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[108] Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 53.
[109] Ibid., p. 49, p. 52, p. 53, p. 64.
[110] Ibid., p. 50.
[111] As indicated in Chapter 1, see Davidov, *Women's Camera Work*, p. 81.

If the camera should be a passive object, "a machine to be used", so too the feminine.[112] In describing the "intellectual hysteria" of woman, Weston attempts to reduce their domain to that of objects of sex, childbirth, and, given the nudes, something of a generic character.[113] In this context, Weston remarks on a shift from photographing clouds as a corollary of the "elusive", "fugitive expression" of the pathology of humanity, to "a more earthly theme": Tina Modotti bathing under a sun which (in Maddow's commentary) reveals all, from which nothing can hide (fig.30).[114]

Fig.30: Edward Weston, *Tina on the Azotea* (1924-5-6), gelatin silver print, 17.7 x 23.9 cm.

Maddow's gloss, which ignores the possibility of Modotti's determination of the image through pose, for example, suggests that images of this type and period can be

[112] Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 254, p. 29.
[113] Ibid., p. 63.
[114] Ibid., p. 57, p. 50. The disjunction between the claims of power and the actuality of the domestic would bear comparison to Rivera's hypocritical envy of Modotti's lovers; her resolution of relational tension in the adoption of role of mother; the belated recognition of his dependence. See Hayden Herrera, 'Beauty and the Beast: Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera', in Whitney Chadwick & Isabelle de Courtivron (eds.), *Significant Others: Creativity & Intimate Partnership*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1993, pp. 132-5.

considered as "intimate and homey landscapes; without horizons [....] exterior rooms [...] organized around a hollow space".[115] Indeed, these images of the sites of feminine labour, in which the dark recess of ovens become reduced to formal-erotic design, can be read as an extension of Weston's domicilliary milieu (fig.31).

Fig.31: Edward Weston, *Nude, New Mexico* (1937), gelatin silver print, 18.8 x 24.0 cm.

This milieu is characterised by domestic tensions created not only by Weston's sexual desires, but by the practice of photography. The functionality over-ridden by formal demands is specifically that of the domestic scene. Creative work should come "as easily and naturally as breathing or evacuating", but precludes – or attempts to sublimate – that bodily function.[116]

[115] Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 57.
[116] Ibid.

The making of *Excusado* (1925), an image of the affirmation of form over function, is marked by the fear of its contingent need for normative use (fig.32).[117]

Fig.32: Edward Weston, *Excusado* (1925), gelatin silver print.

This situation, in which the conceptual image of domesticity conflicts with the domestic economy, where the ideational comes into contact with the socio-practical, is mirrored in Weston's mental reduction of the house workers to formal-erotic images of gingham and skin which prefigure sexual contact – 'seeing photographically' thus means applying the conceptual containment of infinite detail through formal simplicity to the social as a mode of containing the feminine *in actu*.[118]

Weston's statement of this milieu is also witness to something of an inversion: "I was meant to fill a need in many a woman's life, as in turn each one stimulates me,

[117] Ibid., p. 64.
[118] Ibid., p. 62.

fertilizes my work."[119] Weston's fertilisation is not the mark of an admittance of the feminine, not a mark of parapraxis; rather, the intentional appropriation of the rhetoric of engendering for the purposes of masculine creativity – to displace the feminine from such activity, and to constrain it to the sphere of biological reproduction. As Battersby indicates, the rhetoric of impregnation marks a romantic resistance to industrialisation, in which the effort of creative labour replaces the Renaissance desire for creative ease.[120] However, Weston's reiteration of the relation between femininity and mechanicity is the locus by which his masculine purity is inflected by this bad form of femininity.

Weston's need for constant sexual and domestic friction in order to create work indicates that the feminine is not to be reduced to an entire neutrality. But the *Daybooks* are witness to something of a mechanisation of sex: where there is no domestic friction, no distance, no secrets, sex becomes "boresome as business".[121]

> I slip a new disc into my music box of emotions, grind the crank and out speaks another tune. To be sure it may be a more or less familiar melody, but one can always change the tempo and use imagination.[122]

Deprived of the enlivening affect of domestic frisson, Weston in this guise is not much more than a robot organ grinder, randomly working its way through an alphabetic list: as the production line of women reduced to their initials indicates, creativity becomes solace for innate mechanical repetition – forms of the feminine. Friction requires a

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[119] Ibid., p. 260. McGrath truncates this passage as an indication of the "incestuous union of the male and female elements *within* the male" via Jean Cocteau, and thus an indication of Weston's consignment of woman to the imaginary. See McGrath, 'Re-reading Edward Weston', p. 267, p. 500, n. 16.
[120] See Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, p. 73.
[121] Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 63.
[122] Ibid., p. 62.

resistance – which is not simply the feminine, but the domestic scene. This milieu is not the danger of the "complex domicile" which Lyotard posits against the paternal order of the bucolic domus, but its aestheticised form, which is held in tension by the power of the patriarch.[123]

In the context of Weston's emasculating mechanicity, some note should be made of the difference between still life and portraiture in Weston's practice. The former is the proper domain of previsualisation, whereas the latter is the domain of the intuitive reflex in order to catch the fleeting moment – the contingency of the latter is thus more pronounced. Weston's description of the taking of *Manuel Hernandez Galvan* (1924) is marked in terms of such masculine intuition: "the trigger to his Colt fell, and I released my shutter. Thirty paces away a peso dropped to the ground – 'un recuerdo' said Galvan, handing it to Tina" (fig.33).[124]

Fig.33: Edward Weston, *Manuel Hernandez Galvan* (1924), gelatin silver print, 22.7 x 18.0 cm.

[123] Jean-François Lyotard, '*Domus* and the Megalopolis' (1997), in trans. Geoffrey Bennington & Rachel Bowlby, Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (1988), Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, p. 196.
[124] Maddow, *Edward Weston* , p. 49.

Weston's souvenir, as Adams pointed out, is not optically acute, fails to attain to the rhetoric of infinite detail – what marks the masculinity of the moment, and of the photograph, is rather the description of Galvan's potent accuracy. The photograph's visual contingency and effeminacy, an "unlucky mechanical accident", thus requires textual, mythifying supplement.

At least, this registers something of an impurity within the impression of the masculine, an impurity whose consistent presence as a causal feature of Weston's creativity is not constrained by either aesthetic or actual rituals of purification (photographic form over function, diets and cold baths). This moment of slippage indicates a connection to the chain of negative terms: the feminine, the mechanical, the commercial, the acephalic. There is a link between photographic impurity and physical purification where Weston contrasts the "monotony" and "stagnation" of retouching with the "salvation" of such rituals, which thus have a relation to the rituals of photographic purism which characterise the rhetoric of Group f/64.[125] But the image of photochemical purity is suspect: Weston used print enlargement, retouching and copy-negatives to arrive, by such deferrals and displacements, at a ten by eight negative for contact printing.[126] Infinite detail may thus be a mediated and impure product, where its image is attained – requiring the detour of a femininity from which it can never be fully disentangled. These impurities of the masculine are the obverse of the logical impurity of its construction of femininity as natural-organic and mechanical. Hence, this impurity

[125] Ibid., p. 49; Davidoff, *Women's Camera Work*, pp. 26-7. The masculinising rituals of purification stand as an aestheticised form of Brian Elsea's analysis of anthropological gender-politics, in which "exclusively male rituals" signal a fear of female bio-reproductive power, and the attempt to wrest its metaphorics for masculine ends, resulting in the figure of the "pregnant phallus" – which would precisely describe Weston's moment of fertilisation. See Elsea, *Fathering the Unthinkable*, p. 16.
[126] Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 256.

pervades the oeuvre. Each and every negative housed in the fireproof 'Vault' which is the specific Weston archive, with its paternal stamp of authenticity and authority, is in this way destabilised.[127]

In this sense there is some pressure to re-think the dark recesses of the Mexican period. Given Weston's mechanisation and feminisation, those signs of the ad infinitum, these recesses come to reflect a condition from which the masculinity of the practice cannot quite escape. They represent, then, less the somatic recess of the feminine, or an impenetrable otherness, but the blunt facticity of the place of feminine domestic labour, the circulations of capital, and the mechanical ad infinitum, within the production of these photographs. The masculinity produced through this practice is not simply the romantic gender duality envisaged by symbolic birth, but a destructive self-differentiality which registers the internal incohesion of the symbolic. Weston suspends between the mechanical feminine ad infinitum and the intuitive masculine absolute, not in synthesis, but disarray.

Concluding Note – The Failure of the Equivalent to Constrain the Infinity of the City.

The internal impurity of Stieglitz's attempt to universalise the chaos of modern life encounters an indeterminate force which, by resisting the universal, must logically bear upon particularity, femininity, and the detail. As equivalents of the 'profoundest' human experience, Stieglitz's photographs directly indicate a relation between indeterminacy and paternal determination: "[m]y photographs are a picture of the chaos in the world, and of my relationship to that chaos. My prints show the world's constant

[127] Cole Weston, 'Afterword', in Maddow, *Edward Weston*, p. 286.

upsetting of man's equilibrium, and his eternal battle to reestablish it."[128] The chaotic and excessive flux of the modern, technological world pervades the series of photographs represented by the photographs *From the Back Window, "291"* (1915-16), *From My Window at an American Place* (1931-33), and *From My Window at the Shelton* (1931, 1935). Despite Stieglitz's affirmation of modernity and technology, in visual form from the pictorialism of *The Hand of Man* (1903), these images represent repeated and protracted instances of an attempt to give order to such a world (fig.34).

Fig.34: Alfred Stieglitz, *From the Back-Window, "291"* (1915), platinum print, 24.4 x 19.4 cm.

[128] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 135.

Barbara Lynes notes the paternal restriction by which O'Keeffe was dismissed from exhibiting *New York with Moon* (1925), precisely in that it represented a subject which even tested masculine appropriation: O'Keeffe "was told it was an impossible idea – even the men hadn't done too well with it."[129] The metropolis offers a significant threat to the determinations of masculine order. This threat lies partly in the sheer mechanicity of the urban, as Stieglitz indicates in a response to Marsden Hartley: "[y]ou speak of New York as an unspeakable place. It is truly that. But it is fascinating. It is like some giant machine, soulless, and without a trace of heart."[130] But it is not merely such inhumanity that is at issue, since human creativity can facilitate the machine in showing its soul.[131] What is at issue is the quantitative excess of its indeterminate complexity. Shape, in its equivalency, offers a way of mediating and containing the complexity of infinite detail in an alternate way from the diffusion of pictorialism. In this mode, Stieglitz here claims the commensuration of the urban denied to female and other male artists:

> I have done some quite good photography recently. It is intensely direct. Portraits. Buildings from my back window at 291, a whole series of them [...]. Not a trace of hand work on either negatives or prints. No diffused focus. Just the straight goods. On some things the lens stopped down to 128. But everything simplified in spite of endless detail.[132]

The Apollonianism of these images through their imposition of perspectival correction is clear in comparison to Coburn's *The Thousand Windows* (1912), with its proliferation, its vertiginous, Vorticist view (fig.35).

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[129] Lynes, 'Georgia O'Keeffe and Feminism', p. 442.
[130] Alfred Stieglitz to Marsden Hartley (1914), Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 70.
[131] Alfred Stieglitz to Georgia O'Keeffe (07.10.1916), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 201
[132] Alfred Stieglitz to R. Child Bayley (01.11.1916), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 201.

Fig.35: Alvin Langdon Coburn, *The Thousand Windows, New York* (1912), gelatin silver print, 20.7 x 15.7 cm.

Coburn courts the vortex here, despite the attention to geometry, whereas Stieglitz's photographs are rectilinear, suppressing disorder.[133] Two things are contained by the symbolism of shape: the chaotic, contingent and excessive detail of external nature represented by the metropolis, and the infinite detail of the photograph. These photographs attempt to locate the "universal thing" amid the "transition" of the city as new buildings emerge.[134] In Stieglitz's wanting to place a cot by the window of the gallery in order to watch the scene throughout the night, a permanent feature of the later years, the gallery becomes a domicile, a place of retreat from which to convey order to an image of the exterior.[135] Such an inhabiting appears to extend the purpose of the design of 291 – an architectural "facsimile" or simulation of the Photo-Secession

[133] See Reinhold Mißelbeck, 'Alvin Langdon Coburn's Vorticist Experiments', in Karl Steinorth (ed.), *Alvin Langdon Coburn: Photographs 1900-1924*, Zurich and New York: Edition Stemmle, 1998.
[134] Alfred Stieglitz to Hamilton Field (16.11.1920), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 202.
[135] Alfred Stieglitz to Georgia O'Keeffe (22.01.1917), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 202.

galleries in order that "[t]hose already accustomed to coming to them would feel at home."[136] Such emplacement is recognisable in Sekula's remark of *The Steerage* – that the "photograph is believed to encode the totality of an experience, to stand as a phenomenological equivalent of Stieglitz-being-in-that-place."[137] The finitising equilibrium of aesthetic judgement appears as a projection which effectively pastoralises the metropolitan scene, not in the sense of visualising "canyons", Stieglitz notes, but in their pacification of urban contingency through formal simplification.[138] But such pacification does not always quite reflect back onto the domestic interior.

> ... The window at 291 was quite marvellous to-night as I looked out. – It seemed so restful out there – the buildings all lit up looming in the mist – & below my open window – rooftops of neighboring houses. – Inside the room the atmosphere was thick – there was a sullen face. ... .[139]

The restfulness of the scene represents the experiential moment of symbolisation. The reference to 'atmosphere' echoes with its place in Stieglitz's account of the making of *The Steerage* (1907).[140] But if in this latter account the process of symbolisation allows the sense of an escape from the claustrophobia of nouveaux riche sociality, the atmosphere within 291 appears as a disturbance which remains despite symbolisation – a disturbance within the simulation of the domicile. If, as Bürger asserts, Romantic subjectivity posits "a productivity that need not crystallise into art but rather remains a form of life", this moment is one in which life refuses to crystallise into art as an

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[136] Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 68.
[137] Sekula, 'On the Invention', p. 100.
[138] That is, in difference to Adams' literal pastoralism. See Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, p. 70.
[139] Alfred Stieglitz to Georgia O'Keeffe (13.11.1916), *Photographs and Writings*, p. 201.
[140] See Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, pp. 63-4.

expression of the universal.[141] If there is also something of a relation to atmosphere in the pictorialist sense, what this indicates is that while the exterior world can be photographically brought into proximity with the paternal desire for order and equilibrium, that it is distanced by an effect that is neither strictly exterior, not strictly internal to the subject. It is a moment in which universalisation and pacification are resisted, but by a feeling that is hardly particular, since unspecified. It is neither then empirical or transcendental, particular or universal, feminine or masculine, but occurring, awkwardly and nonsynthetically, in their between-space. Strangely, then, the site of the gallery, in many ways the very locus of the Stieglitz milieu, produces an effect that resists the (synthesisation of the) polarities of symbolism, and is thus an ambivalent acentricity.

As an intuitive, irrational or emotional moment of experience, the moment of acentricity is proximate to Stieglitz's reception of Bergson's vitalism, a prominent influence in the 1910's and 1920's.[142] As a moment in which the domestic scene is problematised, it is within the terms of the eroticisation of the aesthetic – to the extent that Stieglitz believed that great art required Dionysian instability which could be produced through sexual forays, intrigue, affairs, and its disruption of the familial scene. This sense of familial disturbance would also productively be compared to the 'psychic disturbance' of Kant's *Rührung*, the instability which characterises the first moment of the sublime.[143] Stieglitz in this sense would deploy the sublime within the domestic, extending its gendered politics into the sphere of lived experience. The moment of

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[141] Bürger, 'Aporias', p. 11.
[142] *Photographs and Writings*, p. 222, n. 7.
[143] See Christine Battersby, 'Stages on Kant's Way: Aesthetics, Morality, and the Gendered Sublime', in Peggy Brand and Carolyn Korsmeyer (eds.), *Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

resistance at 291 represents a point at which the intended disequilibrium of the domestic is displaced by one which is not determined, not erotic, not indifferent, but indetermining – a weak quasi-force which is only endorsed by the very contingency of its appearance.[144] This experience of disturbance, given that its indeterminacy is related to the disequilibrium and chaos of modern life, the chaos which symbolism aims to transiently still, exists as something of a primal moment for the photographic discourse of Stieglitz. Somewhere between the interiority of the subject and the exteriority of the urban scene, between the expressive relation to the absolute and the ad infinitum of industrial capital, in this domicilliary acentricity, the premonition of something almost appears which would be neither absolute nor endless, but unfinite.

If the paternal erotic is internally contradictory, it cannot perform containment, and thus endlessness is untotalised. Nor can the affirmation of absolute recess and closure of the feminine be countenanced – the feminine cannot be fully recorded, archived, disclosed. The emasculation of the paternal indicates the destabilisation of photographs in such a way that they cannot be thought of as positive entities upon which an ad infinitum could accumulate. Rather, because the photographs are internally riven, self-differential, they can only constitute the finitised endlessness of the unfinite. Its destabilisations do not offer themselves to a politics of resistance in any traditional or functional sense. Nevertheless, the material accumulation of the photographic archive is the sign of repeated and failed attempts to consign the unfinite to gendered metaphysical opposition. What appears to emerge from these failures is not a return to the fear of endless photographic detail – which signals the process of the loss of wonder at

[144] For Stieglitz's relation to O'Keeffe at this point, see Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz*, pp. 110-113.

definition. Indeed, in Ansel Adams' practice, infinite detail appears divested of phobia, and this indicates a change in the image of nature: colonised and finitised by technology, nature's particularity requires protection from the ad infinitum of capital in order to maintain a relation to the absolute. Since photography is a tool for socially advertising the need for this protection, the production, storage and dissemination of photographs is paramount: hence, the archival politics of Adams' practice extends Stieglitz's queasily pragmatic relation to the specific archives of the big art museums into the domain of the state. Nevertheless, just as Weston's practice will be found as a traumatic denial of the detail through Frampton, Adams' very positivity will be found as a maniacal repression of a feminine form.

CHAPTER 4 –
The Diverted Turn: the Shift from Transcendentalism to Pragmatism and the Gender Politics of the Archive in the Practice of Ansel Adams.

Introductory Note – Transcendental Immediacy Against the Archive.

The photographic practice of Ansel Adams (1902-1984), as with the other paternal figures within this thesis, marks a turning point, here between romanticism and proto-modernism.[1] This failure of transition marks a historical shift in philosophical culture: a movement from transcendentalism, through transcendental pragmatism, and indicating but retracting from secular pragmatism. This shift involves a positive revaluation of the archive in part facilitated by a neuter scientific rhetoric which is distanced from arcane European gendered tropes. Apart from the occasional mention of the 'rape' of the environment, Adams' discourse is not self-consciously gendered: references to mechanical reproduction are neutered in comparison to Stieglitz, but in terms of visual rhetoric, to create a sublime landscape is to reiterate historically gendered tropes.[2] Adams' complicity with degendering conversely marks its perpetuation of the denigration of the feminine. Consequently, this chapter will be working toward a gendered understanding of the tension between the anti-archival tendencies of transcendentalism and the necessary involvement in the storage and circulation of images.

Adams' milieu is determined by variations on the pastoral theme: Santayana's Platonism, Muir's conservationsim, Carpenter's transcendental democratism, James' spiritual pragmatism, and the literary tradition of American pastoral.[3] Characteristic of this milieu, Emerson resists the archives of European tradition and the "uncertain

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[1] Colin Westerbeck, 'Ansel Adams: The Man and the Myth', in Michael Read (ed.), *Ansel Adams: New Light – Essays on his Legacy and Legend*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993, p. 9.
[2] Ansel Adams to Wallace Stegner (10.10.1961), Mary Alinder (ed.), *Ansel Adams: Letters 1916-1984*, Boston / New York / London: Little, Brown and Co., 2001, p. 289.
[3] Hammond provides broad scope of references to these figures, to which this chapter is initially indebted. However, the relation posited between philosophy and visual practice involves no analysis of gender politics. See Anne Hammond, *Ansel Adams: Divine Performance*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 1-3, p. 7, p. 8, and *passim*.

symbolism" of paper money circulation with its ad infinitum of mercantile accumulation – "bubble built on bubble without end".[4] In 1835, Emerson opposes "semi-savage" "Homeric simplicity" to "the libraries of the Reviews and the Commentators". But literature has a positive function – "[t]he poets made all the words, and therefore language is the archives of history" – insofar as it is a secondary mechanism controlled by the bullion of natural immediacy through the picturesque.[5] Emerson's resistance to the monetary and literary ad infinitum proposes a displacement of the archive in favour of the organic and immediate.[6]

This displacement is a structuring principle in Santayana's 'Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy' (1933), which prioritises the organic "seed" of experience over the Freudian psyché's structuring via textual metaphors.[7] This prioritisation is also played out around perception. Its "summary graphic image" is a "trace" which "by no means copies [...] what is going on materially in nature"; yet the graphic or symbolic abstractions of philosophy may "reveal" the soul.[8] This trace would be pertinent to Adams' early images, given their very flat, graphic quality (fig.36).

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[4] Against philosophy, Emerson proposes a vision in which natural details resist generalisation, quivering with hidden meaning, entailing a good ad infinitum in which the subject is lost "in the splendid labyrinth of [...] perceptions, to wander without end". See Tony Tanner, *The Reign of Wonder*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965, pp. 30-36.

[5] Ian Bell, 'The Hard Currency of Words: Emerson's Fiscal Metaphor in *Nature*', *ELH* Vol.52, No. 3, Fall 1985, pp. 735-9, pp. 741-7.

[6] See also Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Experience' – traditional concepts of genius no longer provide escape from the endless series of stairs. See Richard Geldard (ed.), *The Vision of Emerson*, London: Vega, 2001, p. 154.

[7] George Santayana, 'Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy' (1933), in Irwin Edman (ed.), *The Philosophy of Santayana*, U.S.A: Random House, 1942, p. 577. The gender implications of this displacement would be indicated by Derrida's reading of the trace in Freud's 'Note on the Mystic Writing Pad' in 'Freud and the Scene of Writing' (1966), Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1978. The trace, as the mark of the chiasmic collapse of opposites, would entail the destabilisation of gendered terms.

[8] Santayana, 'Some Turns', p. 576.

Fig.36: Ansel Adams, *Simmons Peak, in the MacLure Fork Canyon, Yosemite* (c.1924), gelatin silver print, 11.4 x 8.9 cm.

This graphic quality is maintained in Adams' later work under the concept of "sector analysis" – the geometric interpretation of composition, where the depth of the image is held in tension with the linear quality of composition (fig.37).[9] If the three-dimensional aspect relates to nature in its objectivity, the two-dimensional pertains to the subjective, the soul; which in Santayana is attached to a misogynistic Platonism. 'Platonism and the Spiritual Life' (1927), distinctly reiterates transcendental masculinity, and its attempt to displace the feminine as origin.

Fig.37: Ansel Adams, "Geometrical Approach to Composition" (1942), halftone.

[9] Hammond, *Ansel Adams*, p. 93.

> The world is not respectable; it is mortal, tormented, confused, deluded for ever; but it is shot through with beauty, with love, with glints of courage and laughter [...]. Such is the flitting life of this winged thing, spirit, in this old, sordid, maternal earth. On the one hand, in its innocence, spirit [...] ignores its origin, so buoyant is it [...]. On the other hand, the eye of spirit, in its virtual omniscience, sees the visible in its true setting of the invisible [...] a profound recollection, in which laughter and tears pulse together like the stars in a polar sky, each indelibly bright, and all infinitely distant.[10]

This Platonic recourse carries with it an image of the archive as a denigrated site of endless, indeterminate and effeminising accumulation. In this sense the seed displaces the archive in favour of an immediate, organic relation to the absolute; a relation which will be the condition of meaning within Adams' photographic practice. The description seems pertinent to the winged form of *Lake Near Muir Pass* (c.1933) (fig.38).

Fig.38: Ansel Adams,*Wanda Lake, near Muir Pass, Kings Canyon National Park* (c.1934), gelatin silver print, 22.9 x 29.5 cm.

[10] George Santayana, 'Platonism and the Spiritual Life' (1927), § XXIII The Life of This Winged Thing, Spirit, in Edman, *Philosophy of Santayana*, pp. 468-9.

Hammond refers to Santayana's "the eye of spirit, in its virtual omniscience" in glossing Adams' poem *And Now the Vision.* This describes clouds "in stern phalanx before the lordly sun", terminating with an expression of the eternal: "[i]f truth be known / No night would ever fall, no sun turn cold."[11] The gendered implications of this affirmation are complicated by the "eloquent dark" in its connection to the "urgency of love": the equation of light with masculinity and its absence with femininity includes a masculine form of darkness. In a broad sense, Adams and Newhall's collaborative text *The Eloquent Light* (1963) returns eloquence to the solidly masculine position – indicating that the gendered rhetoric of the transcendentalist milieu is maintained.

§ 1 – Carpenter: the Masculinity of Nature and the Femininity of the Archive.

Graft 5 – The Femininity of the Archival Ad Infinitum: Virgil.

Between romanticism and modernism, Adams is also positioned between the "sentimental pastoralism" of wilderness cults and the "complex pastoralism" of the literary-philosophical variety, existing in a "middle landscape" between nature and technology. Adams shifts from the former to the latter camp, without relinquishing the former's naïvety. The effective ur-texts of Adams' transcendental pastoralism are the Virgillian bucolia.[12] Adams restates their fear of the urban and technological; a phobia which betrays a fear of the archive as a site of uncontrolled, feminising accumulation.

In its highly complex articulation of the relations between external and human nature, the classical discourse provides a map by which the relations between nature and technology in Adams practice may be plotted. Whatever their nostalgia, the *Georgics*

[11] Unpublished and undated. Hammond, *Ansel Adams*, p. 19.
[12] See Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 7.

are explicitly politically engaged – the end of Book II signals a rejection of the military, political and bureaucratic excesses of the late Republic, but, in the address to Octavian, effects a petition to that state for a recognition of agrarian values.[13] The idealism of the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues* is not only located in the affirmation of archaic values, but in the hope that the political engagement of petition will effect a favourable outcome – an assertion of mediation which just is the pragmatic idealism of these works; and this is also part of the function of photography for Adams.[14]

In the first Eclogue, the difference between Tityrus and Meliboeus is between a petitioner of the state for bucolic habitation, and one who is displaced. Fixity, delimitation, political engagement, and a relation to the divine are opposed to a disenfranchised, nostalgic, poetic construction of Arcadia, and endless exiled wandering. The state hence exists as a necessity for the construction and preservation of Arcadia, but its urban centre of power is contrasted to the Saturnian rustic.

> He plucks the fruits which his boughs, which his willing fields have freely borne; nor has he beheld the iron rigours of the law, the Forum's madness, or beheld the public archives. Others [...] dash upon the sword, or press their way into courts and the chambers of kings [...]. One stares with admiration at the rostra; another, open-mouthed, is carried away by the applause of high and low which rolls again and again along the benches [...] they barter their sweet homes and hearths for exile and seek a country that lies beneath an alien sun.[15]

Historically speaking, the public archive represents the bureaucratic centralisation and secularisation of state records, which had previously been held in various temples and magistrates offices, and in housing a vast number of records, marks excess.

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[13] H. Rushton Fairclough (trans.), *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid 1-6*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA & London, England: Harvard University Press 1999, *Georgics*, Bk. I, ll. 24-42.
[14] Virgil, *Georgics*, Bk. II, ll. 73-82.
[15] Ibid., Bk. II, ll. 499-512.

Comparatively, the *Georgics* are marked by a rhetoric of retraction from taxonomic enumeration.[16] This indicates an opposition between the golden age of Saturn, which had no laws, and that of Jupiter, which requires law for the preservation of Arcadia. Given that the *Georgics* describe "the hardness of [the age of] iron" and its "unrelenting toil", there is a connection between the law and the ad infinitum.[17] The law is attached to a lapsarian age in which plenitude, immediacy and the divine are exchanged for want, deferral and the political – effectively, an exchange of the absolute for the ad infinitum.

Alternatively, nature's laws are connected to rural gods: Pan, Silvanas, and the "sisterhood" of nymphs.[18] What is being claimed here is a mode of femininity in contradistinction to the warlike excesses of the state, a positive femininity which is secondarised in relation to the masculine. But the *Eclogues* produce an alternate femininity. Tityrus' freedom is dependent upon an economic circumstance which bears on gender: the accumulation of money through the master's property toward the purchase of freedom from slavery has been delayed by three factors: inertia; the meanness of urban consumers; and by the marriage to Galatea. Here, the feminine is part of a complex of affects which defer telos, ad infinitum.[19] Amaryllis, the replacement, offers no such deferral, but an amenable femininity. Among these causes, then, the bad form of the feminine is presented in continuity with the endless labour of the age of iron, an age whose excess is figured by the public archive.

If Rome represents an excessive force which has alienated itself from its own pastoral roots, the accumulated legal memory of the social within the public archive

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[16] See for example: Ibid., Bk. II, ll. 103-8.
[17] Ibid., Bk. I, ll. 143-145; Thomas, R.F. (ed) *Virgil – Georgics: Volume 1 Books I-II, Virgil – Georgics: Volume 2 Books III-IV*, [Commentary] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 146.
[18] Virgil, *Georgics*, Bk. II, ll. 475-90.
[19] Virgil, *Eclogues* I, ll. 27-35.

effectively represents a distance from the immediate memory of inspiration from the muses, a distance from Mnemosyne. Nevertheless, as the *Eclogues* make clear, if petition is necessary for the preservation of Arcadia, then the record of social status in that archive is necessary too – the possibility of divine recollection depends upon the maintenance of the archival record. The necessary accumulation of the public archive also threatens to defer organic and divine memory. But the iron law is also drawn into a thematics of rusting – rather than an infinite repetition of the same, the ad infinitum of which the archive is a part is connected to a degenerative teleology.[20] This duality of the archive permeates Adams' practice, as does a thought of cultural degeneracy which is close to the thought of one of his prime influences: Edward Carpenter.

Note 1 – The Masculinity of Intuition: the Control of the Feminine Archive.

As I have been arguing, the ur-scene of philosophical and photographic discourse effects an encounter with infinities which never appear in unenculturated form, and thus do not constitute a pure meta-category. Adams' location within this scene is indicated by moments of conversion to and reaffirmation of transcendentalism. Their descriptions are, like Talbot's mythification of photography's origin, and for all their simple affirmation of simplicity, the complex product of different discourses, of which *And Now the Vision* signals a stylistic and ideational filiation to Carpenter.

To begin to account for Adams' contiguity with this thought, at its mythical origin-moments, is the epiphanic conversion in 1925 to Carpenter's *Towards*

[20] Virgil, *Georgics*, Bk. I, l. 467, ll. 493-7.

Democracy (1902).[21] Adams' 'rebirth' is effectively ineffable, better expressed by direct quotations from Carpenter which themselves describe the ineffability of transcendental emotion, and the desire "to 'be quiet long enough to hear what Nature has to say'".[22] Photography, by implication, thus appears as a visual avatar of such literary or textual listening and quotation. Both indicate a retraction from mediating and accumulating description and analysis, a subjection to a pre-existing articulation or visual form. The photograph, while a mediating device which intercedes between man and the natural environment, may thus have a redemptive potential in the viewer's recognition of transcendental unity. Similarly, while secondary in relation to immediate intuition, the petitionary function of Carpenter's text represents positive potentiality, figured as a 'good' form of femininity:

> I weave these words about myself to form a seamless web without beginning or ending. [...]. This is one of my bodies – of the female – which if you penetrate with true sexual power, clinging it shall conceive [...].[23]

If Adams' photographs must be intuited to be understood, they too must be marked by this penetrative mode. This masculine appropriation is what allows the "labyrinthine

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[21] Ansel Adams to Virginia Best (22.09.1925), *Letters*, pp. 25-6; Ansel Adams to Virginia Best, (03.08.1925), *Letters*, pp. 24-5. Such early references to Carpenter disappear quickly from this correspondence, but Adams remains attached to transcendentalist thought, for which Carpenter is exemplary. For lifelong reiterations of transcendentalism see also: Ansel Adams to Alfred Stieglitz (09.10.1933), *Letters*, p. 59, p. 61; Ansel Adams to Alfred Stieglitz (22.12.1936), *Letters*, p. 93 – quoting Jeffers; Ansel Adams to Cedric Wright (10.06.1937), *Letters*, p. 98; Ansel Adams to Edwin Land (12.03.1956), *Letters*, pp. 243-4 – referring to transcendentalism and Emerson; Ansel Adams to Beaumont Newhall, Nancy Newhall, Minor White (16.06.1959), *Letters*, p. 267 – Adams unable to agree with the "cultural mass" but affirms a transcendentalist relation to the world in terms of the continuum of internal and external nature; Ansel Adams to Dorothea Lange (15.05.1962), *Letters*, pp. 290-1 – affirming transcendental holism and "a revival of the Whitman spirit" against political photo-documentary; Ansel Adams to Beaumont Newhall and Nancy Newhall (09.12.1971), *Letters*, pp. 322-5 – in reference to Thoreau and the environment, and the affirmation of 'symbolic wilderness'.

[22] Ansel Adams to Virginia Best (03.08.1925), *Letters*, p. 25; Ansel Adams to Virginia Best, (22.09.1925), *Letters*, p. 27.

[23] Edward Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, complete edition, first published 1905, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1917, p. 32.

darkness" of life to be recognised in its transcendental order. In this mode the soul almost has the allocative role of an archivist, "overseeing; quietly selecting, directing, ordaining".[24] In his acceptance, Adams has 'penetrated' the feminine text, but simultaneously absorbs the pre-text, which appears repeated within the body of his letters.[25] Rather than a parricidal filiation, Adams adopts something of 'feminine' position in relation to Carpenter, but in order to remasculinise the landscape.

The gender of Adams' position would be opposite in Le Doeuff's logic of "absorption": the "phallocratic ruse" lies in the vicarious acquisition of the qualities of another "great man". Consequently, the idea of Derrida as a "disciple" of Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx places itself against Derrida's logic of filiation. But the reading of Derrida here is problematic – in no sense does Derrida defend neutrality, nor singularise femininity in sense that pops out of a decontextualised fragment of *Spurs*.[26] Indeed, here the truth of the feminine is its resistance to patrimonial 'truth'.[27] Adams' position might suggest an unacknowledged gender complexity to Le Doeuff's image of filiation.

The sense of a positive relation between textual mediation and intuitive immediacy, philosophy and phenomenality, indicates, in extrapolation, a relation between the archive and experience. The text is necessary and capable of disseminating its message, but the location of reading, "in the mountains", is vital to such effect: it marks a geographical and ideational distance from the urban archive. The solitariness of

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[24] Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, pp. 36-7.
[25] A Whitmanian mode of reception of the world all at once, behind which unity lies a gendered hierarchy -see Tanner, *Reign of Wonder*, p. 68, p. 81.
[26] Michelle Le Doeuff, *The Sex of Knowing* (1998), trans. Kathryn Hamer and Lorraine Code, London: Routledge, 2003, p. 173, p. 35, p. 179, p. xi.
[27] See Jacques Derrida and Christine McDonald, 'Choreographies' (1982), in Jacques Derrida, *Points ... Interviews, 1974-1994*, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al, Elisabeth Weber (ed.), first published 1992, California: Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 89.

Adams' epiphanies, reading alone in the mountains, reiterates the traditional allocation of landscape to "private feeling", townscape to "the realm of public business".[28] Where Adams contrasts the endless, vertiginous displacement of nature in the barbarity of New York to the "heroic", stable basis of West coast nature, the landscape is masculinised in this complex sense: a masculine appropriation of feminine intuition returns the chaotic landscape to cosmic, paternal order.[29] If Stieglitz's urban scene attempts to contain infinity via erotic form, Adams' rare cityscapes attempt the pastoralising transubstantiation of skyscrapers into canyons, the containment of the infinite via natural form (fig.39).

Fig.39: Ansel Adams, *Broad Street, New York City* (c.1949), gelatin silver print, 16.0 x 11.5

[28] See Fred Inglis, 'Landscape as Popular Culture', in Simon Pugh (ed.), *Reading Landscape: Country – City – Capital*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, p. 188.
[29] Ansel Adams to Alfred Stieglitz (09.10.1933), *Letters*, pp. 60-61.

The natural landscape offers no threat, but is submissive to aesthetic appropriation: external nature is masculinised. What is dangerous is rather the terrain of the library, a sign of excessive intellect – a degenerative, effeminising, bourgeois disease.[30] At issue here is the gender of intuition. Discussing "tenderness" in 1933, Adams defines it as "a sort of elastic appropriation of the essence of things into the essence of yourself, without asking too many intellectual questions".[31] Adams' anti-intellectualism sustains a romantic image of relatively primitive, natural masculinity which historically associates excess intellectualism with feminine pathology – "the vapours", "nerves", 'hysteria', and "The Disease of the Learned".[32] Carpenter's place within this tradition is indicated in 'The Intermediate Sex' (1896): over-intellectualism signals male effeminacy; tenderness is one of the "feminine virtues", along with intuition.[33] Such virtues need to be synthesised by masculine attributes – Carpenter "licenses the grafting of femininity on to a basically male nature and the prestige of a limited form of male androgyny."[34] Tenderness is then an attribute of a certain form of male homosocial relations: "so tender, heroic, constant".[35] In *Love's Coming of Age* (1896), "true" tenderness is a product of the strong and courageous – masculine traits.[36] The relation between women is rather "so rapt, intense, so confiding-close, so burning-passionate".[37] But excessive secrecy must be mediated by masculine intervention.

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[30] Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, p. 394, pp. 20-23.
[31] Ansel Adams to Alfred Stieglitz (09.10.1933), *Letters*, p. 59. 'Elasticity' is also an Emersonian term for a relation to the universal. See Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Experience', in Geldard, *Vision of Emerson*, p. 162.
[32] Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*, London: The Women's Press, 1989, p. 85, p. 87.
[33] See Edward Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age* (1896), London: Methuen, 1918.
[34] John Fletcher, 'Forster's Self-Erasure: *Maurice* and the Scene of Masculine Love', in Joseph Bristow (ed.), *Sexual Sameness: Textual Difference in Lesbian and Gay* Writing, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 74.
[35] Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, p. 396.
[36] Ibid., p. 64.
[37] Ibid., p. 396.

In its radical and progressive attempt to redefine a series of marginalised, silenced or abjected subject-positions (sexual, economic, cultural, and racial), *Love's Coming of Age* valorises matriarchy, but its affirmations of gender equality reflect historical images of femininity which are no longer tenable. The illogicality of the feminine heart can need control by the masculine head – "nefarious" woman needs be "controlled by [...] determined personal will".[38] The feminine may retract from masculine synthesis: the excessive form of the 'good' feminine becomes 'bad' – uncontrollable, contingent. Gender is here determined by medical discourse: excessive menstruation is a sign of the unnatural polarisation of the natural sexual division of labour in bourgeois culture.[39] Here, science closely mirrors the terms of the sublime, where the womb is a contingent, unknowable, and degenerate recess – a secrecy from the rational which is significantly played out as an archival problematic by Carpenter.[40]

Carpenter deigns to separate the library from a connection to the absolute and to connect it to the ad infinitum. The collection is a mountainscape which can only ironically indicate the sublime: the description repeatedly encroaches on the limitless and unquantifiable – "interminable iron galleries" of books and the associated "interminable discussions" of intellectuals are "impossible to sum up and estimate".[41] Elsewhere in *Towards Democracy*, Carpenter's aversion to the ad infinitum reiterates Burke's hostility to the accumulating archives of civil law, describing "myriads and myriads of statutes, overlapping, overlying, precedents, principles, instances, tumbled

[38] Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age*, pp. 50-2, pp. 44-5. For a brief précis of the class implications of such female 'afflictions' in Foucault, see Simon During, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 170-1.
[39] Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age*, p. 180.
[40] For an analysis of the treatment of the feminine body within nineteenth century medicine, see Sally Shuttleworth, 'Female Circulation: Medical Discourse and Popular advertising in the Mid-Victorian Era', in Mary Jacobus et al. (eds.), *Body / Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*, London: Routledge 1990.
[41] Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, p. 459, pp. 459-60.

buried one behind another in inextricable confusion".[42] If Carpenter's text represents the 'good' femininity of paternal intuition, the library represents a bad feminine body which recesses intuitive synthesis, a mass of details without unity – Carpenter reiterates the historical association of femininity and the detail argued by Schor.[43] Archival accumulation is devalued by appeal to the relation between part and whole, microcosm and macrocosm:

> Come, come away ! leave books, traditions, all the dross of centuries,
> [...]
> Deep in thy Heart the ageless celestial museum
> Waits its explorer.[44]

The universal should be sought in natural monuments: "The nettles growing against the gate post, and the dry log on the grass where you stop and sit, and the faithful tool [...]. These shall be for memorials between us".[45]

What these objects memorialise is, in gender-political terms, the sanctity of paternal order in its transcendental, social, and domestic forms, toward the redemption of the ills of industrial society.[46] The function of the masculine transcendental 'One', which is recognised in universal love, is thus the cohesive medium of unity for social, sexual, and cultural differentiation.[47] Havelock Ellis inspires in Carpenter a pseudo-scientific taxonomy of human types, indicating the diffusion of the nineteenth century classifying, archiving tendencies. In extension, Adams provides a spiritual typology of

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[42] Ibid., p. 395.
[43] Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, New York and London: Methuen, 1987, *passim*.
[44] Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, p. 461.
[45] Ibid., p. 66.
[46] See Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age*, p. 141.
[47] Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, pp. 46-7.

natural objects, via the intuitive values of relationships between rocks and trees, and via types and stages of natural life: sapling, mature and dead trees; burnt stumps and new grass.[48] Adams' complicity with the masculinisation of the landscape is indicated in photographs like *Moro Rock* (c.1945), in as far as it symbolises the figure of the lone photographer, itself couched in the myths of the lone pioneer to which Muir's conservationism was attached. A schematic account of the development of the symbolic tree would mark these stages: the pioneerism of *Moro Rock* as a mark of bourgeois individualism and entrepreneurial colonisation; in comparison to the oddly pastoral-industrial image of grids of corn in the Murals Project work; and the later images of Aspens – the image of the individual against the social backdrop (fig.40).[49]

Fig.40: Ansel Adams, *Corn Field, Indian Farm near Tuba City, Arizona, in Rain* (1941), gelatin silver print.

[48] Hammond, *Ansel Adams*, p. 122.
[49] For an analysis of Adams' commercial work see Renée Haip, 'Ansel Adams: Forging the Wilderness Idea', in Read, *New Light*.

Despite this masculinisation of the landscape, the cornfield is complex: not sublime, nor strictly pastoral, but slightly mechanical and wilted – not the promise of new growth in terms of a transcendent relation to nature. There is something of a romantic nostalgia floating around here for pre-industrial naturalism of indigenous peoples, who have become abjected – a melancholy which will emerge from Adams' maniacal inanity.

Despite Adams' impressionistic attachment to Carpenter, the relation to the Carpenterian image of the archive is close. In a letter to the Newhalls, Steichen's appointment as the head of photography at MoMA in 1947, would emphatically effect

> THE COMPLETE ENGULFING OF PHOTOGRAPHY AS YOU AND I AND N [Nancy] SEE IT AND FEEL IT INTO A VAST PICTURE ARCHIVE OF *SUBJECTS*.[50]

The rationale behind this rejection is evident in Adams' attack on MoMA exhibition policy in 1946: "illustration" rather than "expression", "spectacular" and "popular" rather than "creative" – a rejection which is specifically couched in a rhetoric of engendering: "sterile" and lacking "future potency".[51] Steichen's understanding of photography as a medium connected to various functions other than creative feeling (science, education, and communication) is rejected as that which has no spiritual function – the archive becoming a mere accumulation without transcendent potential.[52]

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[50] Ansel Adams to Beaumont Newhall and Nancy Newhall (17.07.1947), *Letters*, p. 191.
[51] Ansel Adams to Stephen Clark (29.04.1946), *Letters*, p. 178, p. 179.
[52] Beaumont Newhall's version is more formalist than transcendentalist: "lacking [...] pure aesthetic merit [...] as should distinguish a show in an art museum from one that might be held, say, in the Museum of Science and Industry". See Mary Warner Marien, 'What Shall We Tell the Children ?' Photography and its Text (Books)' 1984, in Liz Heron and Val Williams, *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the late 1850s to the Present*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1996, p. 208.

Note 2 – The Depletion of the Paternal Sublime: the Desire to Preserve Supernaturalised Nature.

Exemplary of this condition would be images stemming from the Interior Department's Mural Project (Oct 1941 – June 1942). A section of these photographs are subterranean images from the Carlsbad caverns – for example: *In the Queen's Chamber*; *Formations, along Trail in the Big Room, beyond the Temple of the Sun*; and *The Giant Dome* (fig.41).[53] The titles of the images reiterate without comment the gendered cultural encoding of nature: the subservience of the feminine chamber (a place of retreat or domicile) to the sun's temple (a place of residence and worship).

Fig.41: Ansel Adams, *The Giant Domes in the Interior of the Carlsbad Caverns, Carlsbad, New Mexico* (1941-2), gelatin silver print.

[53] These images intersect multiple discourses: economic exploration, the rational determination of natural resources; the tradition of the panorama stemming from the painterly tradition of the 'Great Picture' and the 'scenic nationalism' of American sublime. See Rosalind Krauss, 'Photography's Discursive Spaces' (1982), in Richard Bolton (ed.), *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992; Robert Silberman, 'Scaling the Sublime: Ansel Adams, the Kodak Colorama and the "Large Print Idea"', in Read, *New Light*; and Eva Weber, *Ansel Adams and the Photographers of the American West*, Dighton MA: World Publications Group, 2002.

Railing against the unaesthetic infrastructure of the National Parks, Adams remarks that although the clutter of signs and wires are "perfect machinery for the movement of the public through the Park, there is lacking a subtle and hard to define element: the awareness of detail".[54] Given that this element is precisely what characterises Adams' sense of his visual practice, there is buried here an equation between natural and photographic detail. A point at which the infinite complexity of nature and the infinite nuance of photography coincide, it indicates the attempted encroachment of the transcendental aesthetic into the terrain of the 'real'. But rather than detail, Adams' posture toward the caves concerns luminance, and hence tone: as the "exquisite apotheosis of Touristiana", their "Wagnerian" lighting affronts a place which was "conceived and intended to exist in complete darkness".[55] Adams' ideal relation to the subterranean is expressed as a reduction of the geological to the cosmological.[56] A similar point is made in a letter to Stieglitz:

> The cultural center comprises a café, office, curio counter, and a museum (containing [...] questionable articles of wonderment). [...]. Beyond and above lie a sad infinity of desert and an enormous cloud-filled sky. Nobody pays the slightest attention to either.[57]

In a moment of gendering which is rare for Adams, the stalagmites are explicitly "phallic" and "terribly silent", but their awe is depleted: the caverns are intestinal conveyors of tourist faeces. "Tourist #486579" indicates an enumerated and vacant endlessness – an ad infinitum in which "the God of Economy inhabits the bowels of the

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[54] Nancy Newhall, *Ansel Adams Vol. I – The Eloquent Light*, San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1963, p. 120.
[55] Ibid., p. 130.
[56] 'The comet in the sky, the fossils at my feet; gigantic span of distance, and gigantic span of time. At such moments I am transported to another resonance of being.' Ansel Adams to Nancy Newhall (18.11.1948), *Letters*, p. 207.
[57] Ansel Adams to Alfred Stieglitz (27.11.1936), *Letters*, p. 89.

earth".[58] Its technological penetration by the commercial circulation of people, money, and images is an affront to paternal design, the paternal secret.[59]

Adams, like Rousseau, thus registers a resistance to the encroachment of industry into the terrain of Arcadia, affirming the recessing of the absolute against the ad infinitum. Probed by the technologies of light, the recess is no longer the fearful darkness of Talbot's process, nor the possibility of an opening onto the light of the universal. What is dangerous for Adams is rather unmediated technological advance, and its sublime apogee in "The Bomb".[60] The sentiment is marked by John Muir's antipathy to the modern and urban: "[w]hen an excursion [...] is proposed, all sorts of dangers are imagined. [...] Yet it is far safer to wander in God's woods than to travel on black highways or to stay at home".[61] But this also marks is the displacement of sublime terror from nature: the dangerous recess of the femininity of nature appears to have evaporated.

Yet perhaps this sense of degendering masks a fear of the feminine: in the association of the phallus, money, and faeces, Adams intersects with Irigaray's description of female sexuality. In Freud's association of faeces, money, gift, baby and penis, "[t]he vagina – and even the womb ? [...] – functions like the anus, rectum, and intestines". Where the penis is a "fecal column", all aspects are encapsulated within this

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[58] Ibid., pp. 89-90.
[59] Regarding Bacon's politically contingent limitation of the penetration of reason – "the souls of kings must of course be considered inscrutable" – see Le Doeuff, *The Sex of Knowing*, p. 30. This is exactly a figure of the (good) masculine recess, which mirrors that of the divine; the antithesis of the feminine recess of the archival ad infinitum. The apparent neutralisation of nature in its arcane and feminine form just is the complex and internally contradictory expression of the expansion of paternal reason.
[60] See Ansel Adams to *The New York Times* (25.02.1984), *Letters*, pp. 400-1.
[61] Cited in Elaine Bucher, (ed.), *America's Wilderness: The Photographs of Ansel Adams and the Writings of John Muir*, Philadelphia: Courage Books, 1997, p. 30.

"anal symbolic form" – faeces are the gold standard of these equivalents.[62] In this sense, Adams would represent a resistance to the psychologically regressive symbols of capitalist progress, a defence of paternal sublimation; a resistance to the illumination of the unconscious. This resistance is significantly registered as a resistance to electric light. It, representing a technology which threatens a relation to the absolute through natural experience, is an effectively feminising force which impacts upon the tonal values of the photograph – Adams abhorred flash. This emphasis on tonal qualities also marks a shift in relation to affect – a shift away from the discourse of infinite detail.

§ 2 – From Form to Tone: on the Shift in the Mode of Containment of the Particular in Adams.

Note 1 – Adams' Separation from Stieglitz and the Dionysian.

For Carpenter, universal equivalence through love is subsisted by a Dionysian erotics, and it is on this fundament that Adam's appears to diverge: Adams' distance from the Dionysian is evident in the relation to Stieglitz. Much is owed to the concept of the equivalent in terms of immediate intuition of the universal, but what character of universality the equivalent records or archives is different. Adams' initial response from Stieglitz concluded that while technically perfect (Apollo), the photographs lacked a subjective frisson (Dionysius). Hammond claims that Stieglitz may have quoted Nietzsche's test of a good marriage to Adams, suggesting that "psychological

[62] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987, pp. 74-5. See: Sigmund Freud, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (1905), in *On Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey, Penguin Freud Library Vol. 7, London: Penguin, 1991, pp. 102-4; Sigmund Freud, 'On Transformations of Instinct as Exemplified in Anal Eroticism' (1917), in *On Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey, Penguin Freud Library Vol. 7, London: Penguin, 1991, pp. 298-302.

instability" would be necessary to engage subjectively with the world.[63] Here, a Nietzschean take on Kantian *Rührung* (the psychological instability of the first moment of the sublime) is deployed within the domestic sphere. Adams' consequent affair with secretary Patsy English is recorded by *White Gravestone* (c.1936), which Stieglitz narcissistically dubbed with the highest accolade: equivalent (fig.42).[64]

Fig.42: Ansel Adams, *White Gravestone, Laurel Hill Cemetery, San Francisco* (1936), gelatin silver print.

[63] Hammond, *Ansel Adams*, p. 87.
[64] The remains of the inscription reads: "Sacred / to the memory of / Lucy Ellen / wife of / Wm F Darcy / Died Aug 10 1860 / Aged 26 years ... / A nature of ... ... ".

The photograph effects a substitution of names. The name of Lucy Ellen on the stone is substituted by Patsy English, who substitutes for Adams' wife Virginia Best; but only in order for the photograph as equivalent to substitute their names for that of Stieglitz. Thence, it is a memorial to paternal filiation which opens onto endless chains: Bergson, Nietzsche, Hegel. As semiotic linkages, they are unfinite chains of referral which disrupt the immediacy of the equivalent. Such substitution indicates a relation to gender in Kristeva's *Black Sun* (1987).

> We may [...] find a recourse to proper names linked to a subject's real or imagined history, with that subject declaring itself their heir or equal; what they truly memorialize, beyond paternal weakness, is nostalgic dedication to the lost mother.[65]

Adams, betraying internal weakness, defers to Stieglitz; Stieglitz to the fathers of the aesthetic. If abjection posits a relation between psychic and cultural forms, it follows that Adams' maternal loss is not simply ontogenetic, or phylogenetic, but that it registers the trauma of the worldly loss of external nature. As much as to shore up the faltering symbolic, Adams indicates a need to preserve maternity. The substitution erases the historical specificity of the name of the inscription. A similar condition of inscription is at work in *Buddhist Grave Markers* (c.1956): "[i]nscriptions in a foreign language can have a direct aesthetic quality, unmodified by the imposition of meaning."[66] The conversant – ethnic – reader is thus denied access to the universal.

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[65] Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1987), New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 24.

[66] This commercial assignment was not enjoyable: unlike the sierra the "semitropical usually signifies softness and lassitude to me" – a feminising landscape which should be attached to the inhabitants if Adams' transcendentalism is taken seriously: "human termites". Ansel Adams, *Examples: The Making of 40 Photographs*, Boston / New York / London: Little, Brown and Co., 1983, pp. 83-5. For an entry into the Stieglitzian and Carpenterian determinations behind the Hawaiian photographs, see Anne Hammond, 'Ansel Adams and the Hawaiian Landscape', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 2002.

Adams' retrospective accounts reject Dionysianism, indicating the different quality of relation between the individual and the universal in these practices.[67] If endlessness, indeterminacy and archival accumulation are controlled by an essentially masculine erotics in Stieglitz, they are for Adams controlled by forces emanating from an alternate philosophical terrain. Roberts provides a philosophical context for Szarkowski's sense of the photographer's task as the materialisation of their internal singularity, referring to the impact on America of French Existentialism. Its ideology of self-authentification is presented as a retraction from the socio-political in order to recover autonomy within authoritarian social systems. If this sense of aesthetic autonomy is the meeting-point of Existentialism and liberal humanism, their divergence is noted in Existentialism's "Nietzschean rejection of stable moral codes".[68] This locates the difference of Stieglitz and Adams as a divergence between the two discourses. If Adams' rejection of Stieglitz resists courting *Rührung*, it is a resistance to (a masterable) form of trauma as the origin of art. What Adams appears to lose from the European discourse is an idea of the presemiotic as dark, gnarly and arcane. This significantly indicates the status of the presemiotic in pragmatism – somewhat in James, more pronounced in Dewey, and reaching its apotheosis in contemporary pragmatist readers of Saussure.[69] This shift is

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[67] See: Ansel Adams to David McAlpin (03.02.1941); Ansel Adams to Nancy Newhall (15.07.1944), *Letters*, p. 129; pp. 156-7.

[68] John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998, p. 116.

[69] See Paul Thibault, *Re-Reading Saussure: The Dynamics of Signs in Social Life*, New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 167-8, p. 170. In this neo-Kantian pragmatism, presemiotic thought is aligned to the noumenon – undifferentiated, lacking the unity of space and time in intuition – without any arcane resonances. The phonic presemiotic just is the empirical infinitude of material, physical sounds ... an ad infinitum. In its retraction from the empirical, its ad infinitum is left outside the remit of linguistics. Gadet indicates this difference in discussing the Copenhagen school. In the *Prolegomena* (1943), Hjemslev intends to reintegrate the referent. Hence, "it can be said that Hjemslev introduces a closure into Saussurianism by taking certain principles to extremes: contrary to Saussure's system, Hjemslev's is without residue, without flaw, without infinity." Françoise Gadet, *Saussure and Contemporary Culture*, trans. Gregory Eliot, London: Radius / Century Hutchinson, 1989, p. 126. To Thibault's pragmatism would need be compared the analysis of the bastard birth

enmeshed with a change in the priority of infinite detail, and an attention to tonal values which, despite its indebtedness to Stieglitz's *Equivalents*, is not of the same universal.

Impression 5 – Visual Research: Untitled (Fence).

Ann Truitt's objects appear as associations with personal memories of particular places – as in the three picket-fence palings of *First* (1962) (fig.43). Despite the formal abstraction of Truitt's painted tombstone *Southern Elegy* (1962), this reinscribes the specificity of feminine memory against the employment of tonal affect and paternal mood in Adams' *White Gravestone* (1936) – to obliterate the memory of a specific woman. A similar attention to personal memory, and to the picket-fence as a sign of dwelling and delimitation attends Alice Aycock's *The Hundred Small Rooms* (1984) – a tower of tiered picket fences. This form contrasts *Simple Network of Underground Wells and Tunnels* (1975), which, in its thought of the occupation of space, was "not conceived for the

Fig.43: Anne Truitt, *First* (1962).

of writing and its spectral presence in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (1967), trans. Gayatri Spivak, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1974, p. 70, pp. 44-73. The relevant passage is in Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), Part 2, Ch. IV, § 1, Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, Albert Rieglinger (eds.), trans. Wade Baskin, New York / Toronto / London: McGraw-Hill, 1966, p. 112.

sole purpose of producing an uncomfortable response [...]. Instead, these structured spaces are also meant to convey experiences from the artist's own past".[70] There is, then, an ambivalent valorisation of the earth – site of maternal associations. As much as with subjective identity, both appear concerned with the definition of spaces through boundaries and limits, and their transgression. In its insubstantiality and lack of elevation, the picket fence is less a physical limit and more a symbol for the limit.

The concept of boundary is, as Bennington argues, something of a limit for philosophy: this concept cannot define its own limits, subject to the fate of the concept and the self-differentiality of the impression.[71] If the feminine is marginal to the symbolic order, it is determined by the alogicality of the concept of border as both cut and join, inside and outside – precisely what allows the contradictory characterisations of the feminine as good and bad; outside, margin and centre.[72] Hence the female body has been privileged as a liminal or parergonal object in the analysis of the history of aesthetics, the border between art and the obscene, beautiful and sublime, limited and infinite, feminine and masculine.[73] This liminality is expressed by the way that the feminine may be the limitless linear extension of the ad infinitum and the circularity of a recess which negatively mirrors the paternal transcendental. This piece *(Untitled – Fence)* thinks the weakness of photographic materiality and image (fig.44).

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[70] Ronald J. Onorato, 'Wonder in Aliceland: Memory and Self in Aycock's Art', in Sally Yard (ed.), *Sitings*, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986, p. 39.
[71] Geoffrey Bennington, 'The Frontier: Between Kant and Hegel' (1991), *Legislations: The Politics of Deconstruction*, London: Verso, 1994, p. 271
[72] Toril Moi, 'Feminist, Female, Feminine', in Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (eds.), *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, London: Macmillan, 1989, pp. 117-32.
[73] Lynda Nead, 'Getting Down to Basics: Art, Obscenity and the Female Nude', in Isobel Armstrong (ed.), *New Feminist Discourses*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 216-20.

Fig.44: Sas Mays, *Untitled (Fence II)*, installation shot (colour photograph, dimensions variable), 10 x 36 exposure lengths of 35mm still transparency film, paper clips, archival storage box, dimensions variable.

With something of an echo of Truitt and Aycock's fences, but which would also refer to Strand, Adams, and the social functions of the domestic boundary, each frame contains an identical image of a white picket fence on a black background that is at once an infinite poetic depth and simply the materiality of exposed transparency film. Identical, but for one: a gate. The object from which these exposures were made was a diminutive picket fence built from picture frames – also a boundary made from boundaries (fig.45).

Fig.45: Sas Mays, *Untitled (Fence I)*, installation shot (colour photograph, dimensions variable), picture frames, paint, aprx. 5' x 4' x 6".

There are ten lengths of thirty-six exposure standard commercial length 35mm film (three hundred and sixty images – 360 degrees, full circle) linked together with paper clips. It hence indicates psychological repetition. But in its flimsy meandering it

condenses references: it resembles landmass, national boundaries, and cellular creatures (Freud's thoughts on cell immortality in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle').[74] This fence is weak and flimsy.[75] If it asks for protection, rather than simply providing a space of safety, this need is part answered by its container – an archival storage box which itself needs protection by bubble wrap: there is no meta-archive.[76]

Note 2 – The Deprioritisation of Infinite Detail.

Infinite photographic detail, containing the infinite complexity of external nature, and contained by the compositional ordering of natural objects within the frame, is what gives access to an immediate intuition of the absolute.[77] In Hammond's reading, attention to the particularity of nature in the foreground detail inverts the scale of objects, depicting "an 'infinitude' of detail within each finite fact".[78] The texture of tree

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[74] See Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, London: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 11, 1984, 1991, pp. 297-315, pp. 318-24. Here, belief in the "sublime" *Ananke* (necessity) of death is a counter to the possibility that "chance" events (contingency) may have been avoided (p. 317). On the contrary, death and forgetting are necessarily inscribed in life and memory: if "[i]t is said of an old African man who is dying that he is burning a library [...] the burning of a library is an accident [...] [w]hereas, in *principle*, death is inscribed in life itself". See Bernard Stiegler, 'The Discrete Image', in Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews* (1996), trans. Jennifer Bajorek, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002, pp. 147-8.

[75] In Frampton's discussion, the duration of a film is when it is cranked through the projector, which has a sensuous connection to its literal dimension – in the can: "[f]or the cinematographer [...] the tangible coil of film is his 'art object'". Such a thought appears to inflect Andre's copper ribbon pieces. But Andre's square floor pieces may not be reduced to opticality – they too occupy space: if their repetition, like the vertical sculptures, is inflected by Brancusi's *Endless Column*, they create an infinitely extended cubic zone above them. Against the sense in *12 Dialogues* that industrial repetition functions as a vehicle for a masculine desire, of which the cubic zone would be a spectral phallus, this piece *(Untitled – Fence)* creates a weak zone above itself which asks for care in stepping over it. See Benjamin Buchloh (ed.), *Carl Andre / Hollis Frampton: 12 Dialogues – 1962-1963*, New York: The Press of the Novia Scotia College of Art and Design and New York University Press, 1981, pp. 41-2.

[76] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995), trans. Eric Prenowitz, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 68.

[77] For the Carlsbad images, this technique would not be possible where advertising demands human figures be within the frame – the stalagmites cannot approach the infinite, are quantified, disrupting transcendental equivalence in the name of financial exchange.

[78] Hammond, *Ansel Adams*, p. 143.

bark may appear to be a mountainside, given its occupation of a similar compositional space (fig.46). Hammond thus links "inverse scale" to the "transmutation" of objects.[79]

Fig.46: Ansel Adams, *Giant Sequoias, Yosemite National Park* (c.1944), gelatin silver print.

However, if Group f/64 carries objective photography's credo of maximum detail and maximum simplicity of form, Adams' practice is marked by the hierarchical precedence of something like the latter term.[80] In comparison to Weston's rhetoric of previsualisation and contact-printing, Adams' moment of realisation is a print enlarged from five by four negatives, indicating a distance from the rhetoric of infinite detail. Key images in this regard are *Surf Sequence* (1940) for which Adams retrospectively

[79] Ibid., pp. 141-2.

[80] Initially comprised by Adams, Weston, Imogen Cunningham, John Edwards, Sonia Noskowiak, Henry Swift, Willard Van Dyke; and later by Dorothea Lange, William Simpson, Peter Stackpole. See Nancy Newhall, 'Edward Weston' (1946), *From Adams to Stieglitz: Pioneers of Modern Photography*, New York: Aperture 1999, p. 84.

imagined using medium grained film and specific developers to strengthen its illusion of sharpness by reducing or finitising actual definition.[81] Westerbeck argues that Adams' affirmation of the relation between microcosm and macrocosm combines Thoreau's "close observation and rigorous exactitude" and Emerson's "Grand Designs and eternal truths", manifested as "photo-technician" and "intuitive genius" or "objective photographer" and "expressive photographer" – but that the attempt to reconcile the positions is made through a hierarchy which emphasises the romantic: "objectivity is only the tool of intense expression".[82] It is thus arguable that Adams' photographic relation to the absolute is played out less through infinite detail and more through the rhetoric of visual tone in relation to affect. There are two aspects to tone that I want to emphasise: firstly, in a development of 'inverse scale', inverse tone; and secondly tonal comparability. Both these effects are the sign of subjective expression – a force relatively autonomous from objective spatiality.[83]

The tonal proximity of the whites in *Moonrise, Hernandez* (1941) has a spatial flattening effect: everything comes up against the materiality of the picture plane.[84] The fiction of the photograph is that substance and expression can be combined, but this is a phenomenal either / or – the only synthetic position would be that texturally substantial objects become free in space, moving forward and backward within the illusion of depth

[81] Noted, with something of an error concerning the actual image and Adams' projection of its re-making, by Hammond, *Ansel Adams*, pp. 98-9. See Adams *Examples*, p. 26: the equivalence of nature's infinity and the infinity of the photograph has given way – a loss of wonder.
[82] Westerbeck, 'Ansel Adams', pp. 13-14.
[83] For developments of Stieglitz's attention to tone in Minor White and Aaron Siskind, see Michael Frizot, *The New History of Photography*, Köln: Könemann, 1998, pp. 663-5.
[84] Similar point made concerning *Clouds, Kings River Divide* (1936) by John Szarkowski, *Ansel Adams at 100*, Boston / New York / London: Little, Brown and Co. in association with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2001, p. 33.

– a condition similar to Crary's description of stereoscopy's commodified space: a derangement (fig.47).[85]

Fig.47: Ansel Adams, *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico* (1941), gelatin silver print, 34.9 x 44 cm.

The relative autonomy of objects inflected by tonal manipulation, toward the ends of the absolute via emotive expression, reiterates the structure of a system of economic value whose machination is closer to the ad infinitum. To an extent, Adams must be placed within the archival shift indicated by Krauss to be consequent upon the movement from stereoscopy to monoscopy – from the filing cabinet within bourgeois domesticity to the

[85] Jonathon Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press (October Books), 2001, p. 125.

gallery wall.[86] But the spatiality of Adams' photographs appears to maintain something like stereoscopic mobility while indicating the archival terrain of the library, since there is a sense of archival shift that appears to be consequent upon the emphasis on tone.

Adams' development of mechanical printing processes is marked by an attention to tonal values.[87] The emphasis upon tone as a relation to the absolute via affect allows a positive relationship to mass mechanical reproduction, and to the book: tone allows an identity to be forged between text and image, for their joint production and archiving. The philosophical context of this affirmation comes less from Carpenter and more from the concept of divine luminance in William James. Thus, what Adams' retains from Carpenter is compositional (the foreground detail), while the 'medium' (light) through which composition is deployed is Jamesian. This shift from transcendentalism to transcendental pragmatism involves precisely a shift toward a positive valorisation of the archive. Thus, Adams' practice is one situated, in archival terms, between Carpenter and James, if not more firmly in the latter position.[88]

§ 3 – James: Archival Proof of Divinity and the Trauma of Nature.

Note 1 – Photism and Divinities: the Many Finite Gods.

In quoting the visions experienced in moments of religious conversion James describes visual phenomena with the term *photism*, which ranges from full

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[86] Krauss, 'Discursive Spaces'.

[87] Ansel Adams to Alfred Stieglitz (16.05.1935), *Letters*, p. 80; Ansel Adams to David McAlpin (10.01.1943), *Letters*, p. 145. As Szarkowski indicates, Adams is partly responsible for developments in the duotone and tritone printing processes, but that these techniques also indicate a 'fidelity' to the chemical print. Szarkowski, *Adams at 100*, pp. 38-44.

[88] In spatial terms, the philosophical dimension of the relation between object of view and the position of viewing would need further analysis of the 'geocentric', 'object centred', and 'viewer centred' positions in James. See Tim Rohrer, 'Pragmatism, Ideology and Embodiment: William James and the Philosophical foundations of Cognitive Linguistics', in René Dirven et al. (eds.), *Language and Ideology Volume I: Theoretical Cognitive Approaches*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001.

hallucinations to experiences of divine luminance.[89] Szarkowski notes the resemblance between such descriptions and a fragment from Adams' *The Eloquent Light* (c.1923).[90] As Adams' reliance on Carpenter's quotations indicates, such experiences are prefigured and predetermined by such literary descriptions. They are not simply of external nature, nor of an internal nature that would be exterior to the text, but a subjective melange which is produced by figures from the accumulating archive – Whitman, Carpenter, photographic tropes.[91] And to follow the logic of luminance in James is to redefine the concepts of the infinite, and to mark a schism within Adams' Carpenterian affirmations.

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), James attacks the notions that God is one and infinite.[92] In *Pragmatism* (1907), singular Truth is a monotonous, oracular, "petrified sphinx" which accounts for God, Reason, Spirit, Nature, and Mother tongue. Against singular origin, these abstract designations grow from particular and disparate instances: in actual, man-made speech, new idioms and truths graft onto old.[93] In comparison to Talbot, worldly heterogeneity is being masculinised against the femininity of the apparently singular but divided (oracular) arché. Pragmatism thus evades the split of reality in which

> [o]n the rationalist side we have a universe in many editions, one real one, the infinite folio, or *édition de luxe*, eternally complete; and then the various finite editions, full of false readings, distorted and mutilated each in its own way.[94]

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[89] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902), London: Penguin, 1985, p. 251, p. 253.
[90] Szarkowski, *Adams at 100*, p. 32; Newhall, *Eloquent Light*, pp. 36-7.
[91] For example: Adams' interest in luminance also owes something to pictorialism. See Ansel Adams *Examples*, pp. 50-1.
[92] James, *Varieties*, p. 524.
[93] William James, *Pragmatism* [Lectures 1906-7], New York: Dover Thrift, 1995, pp. 92-3.
[94] James, *Pragmatism*, p. 100.

Against this split, pragmatism produces this radical position: "the notion of many finite gods" – a many which is determined by the ad infinitum of human differences.[95] Any belief in the singularity of the divine counts as "over-belief". Since religion is realised at the level of the individual, there must be gods; since there are gods, they cannot be absolute. James can only testify to "*something* larger than ourselves" which reflects the individualist subject.[96] This is a mediation of the infinites which is in continuity with Bergson's sense that the category of experience in James is neither classical nor modern, finite nor infinite but "simply indefinite".[97]

In terms of Adams' identification with Carpenterian monism, this produces a resolvable contradiction: claims to universality are inverted as the truth of the plurality of individual experience.[98] The possibility of situating Adams self-consciously within this liberal pluralism is indicated where he remarks that the "encouragement of confidence in each individual to express his 'equivalent' is of the greatest importance".[99] In this letter, Adams affirms the image of plurality as an institutional issue: although the Centre for Creative Photography at Arizona was instigated by Adams and Schaefer, Adams registers a resistance to the recognition of his own paternal position: "the word must not get about that the Center is dominated by a 'father-figure'".[100] At this level, pluralism entails a degendering of the public image of the archive. Neutralisation may be specific to this archive, if this earlier example does not indicate a historical shift in thought: a 1971 letter to the Newhalls suggests that Stieglitz should be president of the

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[95] James, *Varieties*, p. 525.
[96] Ibid., p. 525.
[97] Henri Bergson, 'On the Pragmatism of William James: Truth and Reality' (1911), Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey (eds.), *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, London and New York: Continuum, 2002, p. 268.
[98] James, *Varieties*, pp. 453-6.
[99] Ansel Adams to John Schaefer (19.05.1975), *Letters*, p. 349.
[100] Ibid., p. 348.

Sierra Club.[101] To indicate the way in which this thought of the archive is gendered, we must turn to a more precise description of the function of the archive in James.

Note 2 – The Positive Valorisation of Document and Archive.

Adams' images function as equivalents of autobiographical statements of conversion – they are confessional in mode. Comparably, the source from which *The Varieties* is constructed are written, autobiographical confessions.[102] Such texts are the remains of bodies whose mechanisms and relations to thought are unknown – "*Immediate luminousness*, in short, *philosophical reasonableness*, and *moral helpfulness* are the only available criteria".[103] In its luminosity, the text has a relation to photism, and an archival dimension.

Given that James had no personal experience of the divine, the relation to the text is necessarily voyeuristic, requiring the activity of archival accumulation – the "clipping, filing, and storing of data".[104] Texts are part of an impression of the archive as the sleeping repository for various instrumental actions:

> since almost any object may some day become temporarily important, the advantage of having a general stock of *extra* truths, of ideas that shall be true of merely possible situations, is obvious. We store such extra truths away in our memories, and with the overflow we fill our books of reference. Whenever such an extra truth becomes practically relevant to one of our emergencies, it passes from cold-storage to do work in the world.[105]

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[101] Ansel Adams to Beaumont Newhall and Nancy Newhall, (09.12.1971), *Letters*, p. 323.
[102] James, *Varieties*, p. 3.
[103] Ibid., p. 18.
[104] Martin Marty, 'Introduction', in James, *Varieties*, p. xv, p. xix.
[105] James, *Pragmatism*, p. 78.

A comparably positive relation to the archive is readable in Adams very phobias. In 1938 Adams marks the historical difference between Stieglitz's and his own time as one related to the popularisation of photography:

> In the terrific mass of photography pouring out of the darkrooms today there will be found very few good things [...]. Somebody has to gather the good things together – not in just a museum way, but in a way that is emotionally stimulating and which will evaluate, on a clear-cut basis, the powers of the medium.[106]

The archive is positively valorised to the extent that it is part of a circulatory mechanism which limits the ad infinitum of inferior photographs. This represents the institutionalisation of Stieglitz's elitism; but where for Stieglitz photography is by and for the few, for Adams it is by the few and for the many. This anti-democratic paternalism, by associating the social mass with the ad infinitum of photographic accumulation, feminises the mass. Just as Carpenter's book is only positive to the extent that it returns man to the immediacy of nature, the archive is a denigrated form whose existence is necessary in a non-ideal sense. Archival antipathy is reiterated in response to the founding of the Centre for Creative Photography in Arizona in 1975, where Adams remarks that "for" is progressive, "of" more static, and that "ARCHIVES implies the backward look."

Of the thirteen photographers indicated by Adams for collection, two are women; Lange significantly absent not as a woman *per se*, but as a social documentarist.[107] Although Adams never glosses this kind of disproportion, it is possible that it is a mark

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[106] Ansel Adams to David McAlpin (11.07.1938), *Letters*, pp. 109-10. See also David McAlpin to Ansel Adams (07.09.1940), *Letters*, pp. 122-3.

[107] Adams priority list: Edward Weston, Charles Sheeler, Paul Strand, Minor White, Frederick Sommer, Alfred Stieglitz, Imogen Cunningham, Doris Ulman; as well as Aaron Siskind, George Tice, Harry Callahan, Brett Weston, Paul Caponigro. Ansel Adams to John Schaefer, (23.03.1975), *Letters*, p. 345, p. 347, p. 346.

of historical effect, rather than Adams' paternal judgement. Where Carpenter inflicts paternal concepts as an issue of sex, Adams does not in any sustained way. Nevertheless, there are isolated incidents: Adams associates contingency and femininity in the denigration of Lange's technical ability.[108] Adams associates "command" of the medium, feeling, reality and "fortuitous birth" against the "occasional perceptive event".[109] The positive view of Lange's practice is dependent upon its exclusion from "art" as "work".[110] A determined form of masculine creativity opposes and displaces a contingent form of feminine labour. Since the labour of creative 'birth' is masculine, the labour of work feminine, the 'good' photographic archive is a masculine accumulation toward the absolute, opposed to the femininity of the infinites – the mass and its proliferation of images.

In James, the good archive does not indicate an arcane, secretive or hidden recess: its documents are imagined to be in general and visible circulation – like Adams' sense that the archive achieves a positive role only when connected to a strategy of exhibition, dissemination, and engagement. In this openness, there is an antipathy to endless research in the same way that there is an antipathy to origin.[111] This position is played out concerning the organisational architecture of the archive: the taxonomy of God's attributes by systematic theologers is negatively equated with another archival practice – they are "the collectors and classifiers, and handlers of skeletons and skins". Such taxonomy is equated to technology whose materials echo early photographic equipment:

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[108] Judith Freyer Davidov, *Women's Camera Work: Self / Body / Other in American Visual Culture*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1998, p. 27.
[109] Ansel Adams to John Schaefer (23.03.1975), *Letters*, p. 347.
[110] Ansel Adams to David McAlpin (04.11.1938), *Letters*, p. 113.
[111] James, *Varieties*, p. 19, p. 3.

> What is their deduction of metaphysical attributes but [...] something that might be worked out from the mere word 'God' by one of those logical machines of wood and brass [...]. They have the trail of the serpent over them.[112]

This shouldn't suggest technophobia, since the mechanicity of the universe is an operative metaphor, but the masculine containment of the excessive and feminine, whether technological or religious.[113] This mediation is at play where James states that philosophy's formulas "are like stereoscopic or kinetoscopic photographs seen outside the instrument; they lack the depth, the motion, the vitality".[114] Like Marx's variegated Daguerreotype, the decontextualised stereoscope posits a proper state: it is logical that a stereoscope seen within the instrument has a stronger relation to the vitality of experience.

Note 3 – The Gender of Mood: the Chiasmus of Epiphanic Joy and Cultural Melancholy.

As the analogy of the kinetiscope suggests, James' first task is to defend experience against philosophy as the "backbone" of religious life in its various forms: "religious awe is the same organic thrill which we feel in a forest at twilight, or in a mountain gorge".[115] Despite the plurality of individual experiences, there seems to be an overarching requirement: "[t]he divine shall mean for us only such a primal reality as the individual feels impelled to respond to solemnly" – with a "complex" of "tender", "submissive", and "graceful" states of mind.[116] The affect of Adams' photographs appears proximate: "mood of cold grandeur [...] quietness", "[t]remendous power,

[112] Ibid., p. 446.
[113] Ibid., p. 101.
[114] Ibid., pp. 456-7.
[115] Ibid., p. xix, p. 27.
[116] Ibid., p. 38, p. 40.

brilliant light, [....] Mood of movement and brightness", "delicate and strong together", "[m]ood of strength, richness of texture, age".[117] Again, in reference to *Aspens, Northern New Mexico* (1958), the 'concept', what is "felt", is mood: "cool and aloof and rather stately".[118] Adams' sense of mood specifically intersects with the history of the sublime in both a structural and semantic sense. The overall affect of mood is precisely a device which commensurates the particulars of the image. Adams replays the phobia of endless detail, for example in Reynolds, where detail subverts the gestalt moment of the sublime. As Schor affirms, in "rhetorical manuals of the period", the sublime required "grandeur and uniformity".[119]

But the location of religious sentiment in natural or aesthetic objects encounters a key division in *The Varieties* which bears on the gender of Adams' practice. The mediative drive of James' thought is to open a space between the "unmanly" pessimism of the "sick soul" and the blind optimism of the "once-born".[120] The examples given of sick souls are not exclusively, but predominately, characterised by psychological states attached to women, the feminine, and effeminisation in the nineteenth century.[121] Describing the character of the once-born, James says: "we all have some young friend, perhaps more often feminine than masculine [...] whose affinities are rather with flowers and birds and all enchanting innocences than with dark human passions".[122] Toward a mediative position is the figure of the "twice-born" – those who recognise the complexity of life, and require the experience of conversion to counteract negativity.

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[117] Hammond, *Ansel Adams*, p. 111.
[118] Adams, *Examples*, pp. 63-4.
[119] Schor, *Reading in Detail*, p. 18, p. 22.
[120] James, *Varieties*, pp. 142-162.
[121] See for example: Ibid., pp. 90-121.
[122] Ibid., p. 80.

If this repeats Santayana's gesture of displacement of birth from the 'sordid maternal earth', it is precisely Adams' Carpenterian moment and subsequent presentiments of the divine.[123] This mediative bent characterises *Pragmatism* (1907), where James situates his discourse between the "tender-minded" and the "tough minded": the healthy-minded have a "sanguine and 'muscular' attitude" toward the soul.[124] In terms of the American translation of pastoral tropes within which Adams' symbolic forms are located, it is also an opposition between "tender-footed Bostonians" and "Rocky Mountain toughs".[125] The once-born read the character of the divine "in romantic and harmonious nature" (the femininity of the beautiful) rather than in "the disordered world of man" (sublime, masculine chaos).[126] Adams' few images of industrial objects, and the tendency to pastoralise those that do appear, would place this practice closer to the naivety of the once-born. Yet Adams' gendered moods indicate masculine solemnity in appropriation of feminine traits. Again, Adams' increasing engagement with the archive in its aesthetic and state forms would indicate a movement toward the relative dialecticism of the twice-born.

For James, then, psychological and somatic degeneracy need be regulated by intellectual and spiritual positivity – there is a resistance to sex and the body as a basis for religious sentiment. Adams' resistance to Dionysianism fits this model; so too the resistance to social entropy. Adams rejects "gurus" who "inflict confusions which convey mystical meanings – often with the convolutions of disordered sex (and violence)", in a "world which seems to have taken a sudden plunge toward degeneracy".

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[123] Ibid., pp. 80-90, pp. 166-84, p. 189, p. 196, p. 488, n. 1.
[124] Ibid., p. 91.
[125] James, *Pragmatism*, pp. 4-6.
[126] James, *Varieties*, p. 81.

> There has always been degeneracy, evil thinking, filth, etc., but these qualities seemed to be counter-balanced and controlled by a larger sweep of culture and order. Now [....] [i]t seems to be reflecting a universal death wish.[127]

Against cultural degeneration, Adams' images stand as the sign of creative expression, and thus a positive relation to the absolute which is epiphanically characterised by joy, or otherwise characterised by moods which reflect traditionally masculine aesthetic responses to external nature. In this light, Adams' origin-moments of conversion to the transcendental appear, horribly, to be only filled with joy and peace – the presemiotic appearing as a benign force.[128] In *Moonrise, Hernandez*, the light of the sky is tonally inverted by red filtration. The black skies represent expressive choice; the apotheosis of this inversion being *The Black Sun* (1939) (fig.48).

Fig.48: Ansel Adams, *The Black Sun, Owens Valley, California* (1939), gelatin silver print.

[127] Ansel Adams to Nancy Newhall (26.08.1970), *Letters*, pp. 314-5, p. 316.
[128] See Ansel Adams to David McAlpin (04.11.1938), *Letters*, p. 113: "America is a land of joy – more than any other land".

Black skies invert natural tone, replacing spatial depth with emotional depth, objectivity with expressivity, spatial depth with the recess of the ineffable. Thus, the inversion of the paternal light-giver is but its affirmation. Nevertheless it is this very joy which masks a necessary connection to its polar opposite: melancholia – an inversion which is technically contained in the very process which solarises the white light of the star, and which is endorsed by the melancholic moments concerning the entropy of culture. In this inversion, Adams' benign arché gestures toward an arcane presemiotic – the very European legacy it aims to mask.

In Kristeva's *Black Sun* (1987), moods of joy, anguish and fear are "inscriptions" – semiotic processes: "the ultimate reactions to our traumas [...] our basic homeostatic resources", and are thus a mark of the death-drive.[129] Melancholy involves a failure to accede to the symbolic, a failure to utilise the denegation of symbolic language.[130] Hence, in Lechte's précis,

> [r]ather than expressing emotion and affect, the subject *becomes* these: melancholics, in short, act out what needs to be elaborated in signs and symbols formed in response to the loss of the object (mother).[131]

Adams' allegiance to the Stieglitzian equivalent is pertinent here: for Kristeva, "*symbolic* equivalents" precede the acquisition of linguistic denegation via "*symbols* properly speaking".[132] If the melancholic is "deprived of an unnameable, supreme good

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[129] Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun*, pp. 21-2.
[130] Irigaray notes the points of intersection between feminine traits and melancholia, arguing that the female is not characteristically melancholic, because the symptoms are "scattered about rather than organized in a coherent and permanent manner". Rather, given this heterogenous limbo, the characteristic is a hysteria which is defended in its femininity. See Irigaray, *Speculum*, pp. 66-7, p. 71, p. 129.
[131] John Lechte, 'Art, Love, and Melancholy in the Work of Julia Kristeva', in John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (eds.), *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 35, pp. 37-8.
[132] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, p. 23.

[...] that perhaps only [...] an *invocation* might point out", the equivalent represents a "manic position" of denial of loss and affirmation of the 'imaginary father'.[133]

In Freudian terms, Adams' affirmative religious impulse appears to derive more strongly from "the longing for the father" than the "limitless narcissism" of the oceanic feeling so prevalent in Carpenter.[134] If Carpenter's philosophy is subsisted by the Nirvana of the "ocean of sex", I might connect it to Kristeva's "oceanic void" – a "fantasy of pain, but anestheticized, of jouissance".[135] Adams' ocean, in *Surf Sequence*, appears opposite -to be connected to Kristeva's description of Aristotle's "counterpoint to black bile" – "a white mixture of air *(pneuma)* and liquid brings out froth in the sea [...] as well as in the sperm of man".[136] But as much as the play between black skies and white foam (as affect, rather than visual proximity) could represent Aristotle's "controlled interaction of opposing energies", it is the very epiphanic excess of their affirmation of the paternal absolute which plunges them into the exalted denial of melancholia.

But the photographic equivalent might also be thought to perpetuate the abjection of the origin. The tonal inversion of Adams' *Black Sun* indicates a general propensity towards the polarisation, separation, and contrast of tonal values in order to create symbolic equivalents of the affect of natural light. Likewise, the zone system segments the undifferentiated continuum of tonal gradation, a segmentation which assigns the contrast of tonal values within the photograph to emotions which restate historically

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[133] Ibid., p. 13, p. 23.
[134] See Sigmund Freud, 'Civilization and its Discontents' (1930), in trans. James Strachey, *Civilization, Society and Religion*, Penguin Freud Library Vol. 12, London: Penguin, 1985, p. 260; Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), in trans. James Strachey, *On Metapsychology*, Penguin Freud Library Vol.11, London: Penguin, 1984, pp. 262-8. For a description of the "ocean of sex", reeking of Nirvana, see Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, pp. 383-4.
[135] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, p. 29.
[136] Ibid., p. 7.

masculine aesthetic responses. Given that the two-dimensional dynamics of 'sector analysis' and the feeling of formal unity of the photographs depend upon definite shapes emphasised by tonal separation, tonal gradation tends to appear as a feature which must be contained and made secondary. In the emphasis on separation, the photographic 'presemiotic' (the tonal continuum) is positioned as the feminine – an undifferentiated chaos. In comparison, paternal light illuminates, defines and separates out the "minute details" of nature.[137]

Note 4 – The Trauma of Nature: the Museumisation of Nature and the Domestic Sublime.

The trauma of the loss of maternal nature in Adams is historically preceded by James' position, where traumatic external nature appears in diminutive, domestic form. James quotes another figure of Adams' milieu, Whitman: "who touches this book touches a man". Philosophy pretends to be "a picture of the great universe of God", but "the mind always performs its big summarizing act [...] with that strange note of individuality which haunts our memory, like the wraith of the man".[138] If this spectral presence is taken seriously, it gives James' philosophical texts, and Adams' photographs, a particular character. Two of its moments are particularly relevant.

Firstly, in *Pragmatism*, the metaphor of a path as a useful object of knowledge for (epistemological and actual) navigation, in indicating the presence of a house, might be connected to James' experience of being lost in the Adirondacks in 1898 – an indication that pragmatic instrumentality may repress a traumatic experience of nature.[139] The

[137] Newhall, *Eloquent Light*, pp. 36-7.
[138] James, *Pragmatism*, p. 14.
[139] Ibid., p. 78; James, *Varieties*, p. xv.

moment associates determinacy, domesticity and telos against indeterminacy, nature, and wandering. Secondly, the relation to the archive of confessional texts is also involved with a repression of the trauma of the ad infinitum and of the somatic. The archive provides delimitation against the endlessness of grammatically feminine nature;

> a vast *plenum* in which our attention draws capricious lines in innumerable directions [...]. There are in reality [...] infinitely more things with irregular relations [....] but we look for the regular kind of thing exclusively, and ingeniously discover and preserve it in our memory. It accumulates with other regular kinds, until the collection of them fills our encyclopaedias. Yet all the while between and around them lies an infinite anonymous chaos.[140]

For Szarkowski, Adams likewise imparts formal order to the chaos of the world in this specifically Jamesian sense.[141] James explains the difference between order and chaos through an archival metaphor – by comparing geological specimens to the gore of their original existence: "there is no tooth in any one of those museum-skulls that did not daily through long years of the foretime hold fast to the body struggling in despair of some fated living victim."[142] James' example also indicates that the sublime itself is an object of the archive – no longer simply present in external nature. If temporal distance here makes such recognition difficult, there is however a psychological state which brings such horror to the fore in the contemporary, in a diminutive, domestic and emphatically feminine sublime: "[h]ere on our very hearths and in our gardens the infernal cat plays with the panting mouse, or holds the hot bird fluttering in her jaws".[143]

The extreme form of this kind of recognition is a "nervous condition" – a feminising affliction. This attack occurs "without any warning" and leads to horror

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[140] James, *Varieties*, p. 438, n. 1, p. 327.
[141] Szarkowski, *Ansel Adams*, pp. 17-18.
[142] James, *Varieties*, p. 163, p. 164.
[143] Ibid., p. 164.

"without opening or end".[144] The moment is untimely, uncontrolled, contingent, and opens onto a bad sublime: an infinite horror without synthesis or resolution. In comparison, the efficacy of pragmatist research is dependent upon necessity: "books and words [...] come to one's cognizance just at the very moment in which one needs them" – god works "at just the right moment".[145] This "nervous condition" is James' autobiographical confession of a suicidal breakdown, hidden as a quotation from the archival source; which ruse he later revealed. Healthy mindedness is thus part of an erasure of the feminine qua contingency and morbidity. Significant in this regard is James' "embarrassment" in learning midwifery: the fear of the female body.[146] What the erasure of and spectral reappearance of the body in the confession masks is also the failure of a specific aspect of masculinity: James' "problems" with regard to procreation indicates again the untimely body.

Each statement of healthy-mindedness effectively attempts to erase somatic and natural trauma, but their repetition cannot but indicate what is erased. Adams' relation to photographic repetition might be indicated in the gloss attending *White House Ruin, Canyon de Chelly National Monument* (1942):

> Only when I had completed the print months later did I realize why the subject had a familiar aspect: I had seen the remarkable photograph made by Timothy O'Sullivan in 1873 [...]. I had stood unaware in almost the same spot on the canyon floor, about the same month and day, and at nearly the same time of day that O'Sullivan must have made his exposure, almost exactly sixty-nine years earlier. [...]. Obviously I had come across one of the most rewarding locations for a photograph [...].[147]

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[144] Ibid., p. 160.
[145] Ibid., p. 472.
[146] See Marty, 'Introduction', in James, *Varieties*, p. xiv.
[147] Ansel Adams *Examples*, p. 127.

Adams' placid sense of his place within the names of photographic tradition through happy contingency obliterates the determination of the subject through pre-existent photogenic and commercial norms – the demands of the Murals Project. The repetition would be a mark of the endless repetitions of capital – the very thing which threatens nature and the absolute. The difference of Adams' cropping indicates the aesthetic form of Eros – it is only these nuances, their affective slightness given inflated signification by the discourse of transcendental emotion, that differentiate the photograph from death.

Adams' rejection of the Dionysian could be read as a repression of the psycho-sexual, but the Carlsbad caves indicate a distance from James. What is traumatic for Adams is less nature in its femininity, and more the feminising encroachment of capital's ad infinitum onto its terrain. In both Adams and James, exit from the morbid labyrinth requires that indeterminacy be forgotten by the recognition of something like the paternal sublime. But in James this entails a repressive attachment to European philosophical tradition that will not be thrown off until the archival impression of John Dewey.

§ 4 – Intention, Taxonomy, and the Archive.

Note 1 – Dewey: the Disappearance of the Sublime.

If Adams represents a transition between Carpenter's transcendentalism and James's pragmatic spirituality, Adams thus falls short of attaining the kind of secular pragmatist position adopted by Dewey. But Adams' photodocumentary work will be shown to be complicit with the encroachment of archival principles of rationalisation

upon the natural and domestic scenes, and to make recourse to a denotative model of communication complicit with pragmatism.

In *Experience and Nature* (1929), nature is separated from its feminine, arcane, European characteristics in a way that is far more extensive than James' repressions. If James proposes a non-arcane relation to the library, Dewey similarly retracts from the accumulating glut of philosophy's archival ad infinitum.[148] Attending to the relative immediacy of "primary experience", pragmatism consigns subjectivist and idealist thought as "curiosities to be deposited, with appropriate labels, in a metaphysical museum."[149] What takes the place of the presemiotic just is "experience", which distances itself from the femininity of the bad sublime: "[i]n the natural sciences there is a union of experience and nature which is not greeted as a monstrosity".[150] The position has a specific image of the archive: in *Experience and Nature*, it appears as the natural history museum in which

> one beholds a mass of rock and, reading a label, finds that it comes from a tree that grew, so it is affirmed, five million years ago. The geologist did not leap from the thing he can see and touch to some event in by-gone ages; he collated this observed thing with many others [....] and then he takes pains to bring them within the scope of experience.[151]

The concept of language which is implicit in this description of taxonomic order is denotative and instrumental.[152] Dewey approves Ogden and Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) specifically in terms of instrumental or rhetorical function – the ability to produce action in a listener – with a quotation which indicates a phonocentric bent.

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[148] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (1925), Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1994, p. 12.
[149] Ibid., p. 19.
[150] Ibid., p. 2.
[151] Ibid., p. 3.
[152] Ibid., p. 8.

> "The manner in which I am using language now, in writing these words, the manner in which the author of a book or a papyrus or hewn inscription has to use it, is a very far-fetched and derivative function of language."[153]

The sense of intentionality in which the world is an intentional object of experience is hence coupled to a concept of linguistic intentionality: the ideal possibility of reconstructing authorial meaning through the text.[154] What enables the archive to appear in positive guise is thus this intensely problematic appeal to the metaphysically subsisted immediacy of the denotative text. Comparably, the photographic title throughout Adams career is descriptive, and attached to geographical delimitation – a thing (a natural or fabricated object, event of weather) in a specific place. For all of the affective burden of the image, and for all of the ecological-transcendental burden of the title, Adams relies upon language in its most prosaic sense. The transcendental relation between the topographic title and social taxonomy in its archival dimension is no more marked than in Adams' rare foray into the world of social documentary photography.

Note 2 – Manzanar: the Infliction of the Sublime upon the Domestic Interior.

Adams' practice is marked by an increasing engagement with national politics and ecology.[155] Like Virgil's entreaty, this takes the liberal form of petition to governmental bodies in both letters and images – a deployment indicated in the photo-essay of the Japanese relocation camp at Manzanar (one of many mass incarceration centres set up prior to the wake of Pearl Harbour) petitioning the state for recognition of the internee's

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[153] Ibid., pp. 169-70, n. 4.
[154] See I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgement*, (1929), London: Routledge, 1952.
[155] See for example: Ansel Adams to Didi Bottemanne (13.01.1969), *Letters*, pp. 310-311; Ansel Adams to "the public" (04.02.1969), *Letters*, pp. 311-12; Ansel Adams to President Jimmy Carter (16.07.1980), *Letters*, pp. 371-2; Ansel Adams to William Turnage (xx.xx.1981), *Letters*, p. 377 – a letter of petition in favour of a policy of petition.

Americaness. They were published in *Born Free and Equal* (1944), with the involvement of the Secretary of the Interior, but after negative public response, Adams consigned the images to the Library of Congress in the hope that the future might be germane to their reception.[156] Here, the archive is the repository of future instrumentality, as in James.

The title of the book inscribes a transcendentalist concept of sociality, in which the archive is necessary but secondary to the more immediate relation between man and the environment (fig.49).

Fig.49: Ansel Adams, *Tom Kobayashi* (1943), gelatin silver print.

[156] Ansel Adams, *Born Free and Equal: The Story of Loyal Japanese-Americans at Manzanar Relocation Centre, Inyo County, California* (1944), in John Armor and Peter Wright, (eds.), *Manzanar*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1989, p. xviii.

Against the official sense that racial determinations are stronger than the national, Adams stated:

> I believe that the arid splendour of the desert, ringed with towering mountains, has strengthened the spirit of the people of Manzanar. I do not say all are conscious of this influence, but I am sure that most have responded, in one way or another, to the resonances of the environment.[157]

This posits a continuity between the domicile and the environment which is close to the relation between house and land in Thoreau's *Walden*.[158] The environment here no longer appears subject to discourses of arcane, feminine nature – it does not resist spirit. Emerson's attachment to Thomas Browne (1605-1682) may be pertinent here: *Religio Medici* (1634-53) affirms Aristotle's "Nature does nothing in vain" – the "womb of nature" contains the "seeds and principles" of the paternal sun, indicating "the wisdom of his hand".[159] And this unconscious reception of divine order appears identical to the unconscious function of tonal nuance in conveying the transcendental 'message' of Adams' photographs.[160] The positive effect of this inclusiveness is that nuance is no longer appropriate only to the conscious knowledge of an aesthetic elite, but this is not without problems. Transcendental thought is amnesiac regarding the harsh conditions of Owens Valley, and the carceral reproduction of disciplinary space.[161]

The Manzanar images argue that nationality is the product of a relation between man and landscape – a Carpenterian concept of democracy. In this sense, there is a

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[157] Ansel Adams, *Born Free and Equal*, cited in Armor and Wright, *Manzanar*, p. 44, p. xvii.
[158] See Henry Thoreau, *Walden: Essays on Civil Disobedience* (1854), New York: Airmont Publishing Company 1965, p. 84.
[159] Abridged in John Hollander and Frank Kermode, *The Literature of Renaissance England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973 p. 973, pp. 977-8.
[160] Ansel Adams to Nancy Newhall (25.01.1961), *Letters*, p. 277.
[161] See Davidov, *Women's Camera Work*, pp. 289-90.

pastoralising tendency which penetrates the organisation of social and familial life. Adams' transcendentalist rhetoric appropriates the domestic interior's visual content as documentary 'proof' of the desire for sublime natural landscape against the schism of the world at war; the political 'necessity' of the time influencing the image of domestic conformity to the Caucasian, paternal image of 'home' (fig.50). The ostensive clinicism of these images of domesticity could be no further from Stieglitz than at this point.

Fig.50: Ansel Adams, *Toyo Miyatake Family* (1943), gelatin silver print.

The gendering of these images of the domestic are complex. The image of family conforms to contemporary paternal structure – the father represents authority and control, but in diminutive, feminised fashion: these people are presented as unthreatening conformists. As aliens, they occupy the feminine place of the abject, but

they are domesticated, the overwhelming force of this pacification indicating the obverse fear of the sublime threat of the 'yellow peril'. Adams is thus within the terms by which Tagg describes those documentary practices which speak to and for authority "about those positioned as lacking, as the feminised Other, as passive but pathetic objects capable only of offering themselves up to a benevolent, transcendent gaze – the gaze of the camera and the paternal state".[162] Certainly, denigration is not the object of Adams' intent, but his subjects are positioned as only being able to offer to America the passive image of itself.

The impression of transcendental equality given by the title of the book is disingenuous. The project represents a taxonomic endeavour which is parallel to contemporary state requirements – in Adams' words: to "clarify the distinction" between the Japanese-loyal and American-loyal by emphasising place of birth.[163] This is precisely an issue of identity which intersects with philosophical-cultural tropes of engendering. It is also an issue that reiterates the thematic of the recess: fears of conspiracy, the secreting of power behind an Americanised exterior.[164] The historical background of such phobic classification begins at least with late nineteenth century Japanese immigration to the American west coast, with political issues of colonisation and occupation of the land indicated, for example, by the 1913 Alien Land Laws prohibiting its purchase.[165] A contemporary commentator supporting the bill stated:

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[162] John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988, p. 12.
[163] Ansel Adams to Nancy Newhall (xx.xx.1943), *Letters*, p. 147.
[164] Armor and Wright, *Manzanar*, p. 23. Adams' intent is rather to mark the indifference between Japanese and Caucasian, hence the line "between inside and outside" of the camp becomes unclear. See Davidov, *Women's Camera Work*, p. 288, pp. 283-90.
[165] Armor and Wright, *Manzanar*, pp. 27-8.

> [n]ear my home is an eight-acre tract of as fine land as there is in California. On that tract lives a Japanese. With that Japanese lives a white woman. In that woman's arms is a baby. What is that baby ? It isn't a Japanese. It isn't a white. It is a germ of the mightiest problem that ever faced this state.[166]

Behind this phobia of bad seed, bad birth, and bad mother, the social face of the fear of the bad sublime, there is a fear of hybridity – that monstrosity which resists taxonomy. Against this unabashed racism, Adams' tendency to de-politicise racial, national or gender oppositions in transcendentalist terms proposes a "classification" of the world into the "predatory" and "generous" spirits. Here, around the time of the Manzanar project, Adams resists the reversal of master and slave, affirming that despite dissimulation, the identity of wolf and sheep remains embedded.[167] Hence, and despite the difference in attitude to racial identity in Adams' transcendentalism, the monstrosity of the hybrid logically subsists the classificatory drive of the Manzanar photographs. And it similarly subsists Adams' typology of natural objects: if a dual or synthetic relation between nature and culture is admitted by complex pastoralism, what may not be admitted is the hybrid's difference from the difference of nature and culture, its destruction of their ideality. The hybrid is a figure of chiasmus: where opposites collapse; where identity becomes non-elemental and indeterminate; where the identifiability of objects in symbolic exchange become lost in endless deferral. What is traumatic to Adams' practice is thus, not only the destruction of the sublime, the loss of the absolute infinite and the encroachment of the ad infinitum of capital, but beneath these, the trauma of the unfinite.

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[166] Ibid., p. 29.
[167] Ansel Adams to Alfred Stieglitz (22.08.1943), *Letters*, p. 149.

Concluding Note – The Mathematisation of the Infinites.

The Manzanar photographs maintain that man may access national spirit through the symbolic wilderness of preserved external nature, representing a resistance to the process by which technology and culture deplete divinity. They are thus contradictory: taxonomic and against secularisation. In this resistance, Adams titles and images indicate the labels and objects in Dewey's museum, where nature and the presemiotic are divorced from their gendered, aesthetic terms. In this sense, Adams represents resistance to a development of a posture toward the infinites that finds its contemporary apotheosis in Badiou. Badiou argues that because Romanticism is bound by the finitude of history and existence, the infinite appears externally as God, restricted to the jurisdiction of the One. Against the One, Badiou proposes to reinscribe the infinite within the "neutral banality" and "simple and transparent deductive chains" of mathematics, beyond which is "the void".[168] James is not within Badiou's lineage, but at something more than a semantic level, these concepts are strikingly close.

Through the lens of Badiou, James may be seen to resolve as a transitional struggle against the secularisation of the infinite, 'many finite gods' prefiguring "indifferent multiplicity". Rather than the end of deity, James proposes a 'good sublime' of humanised divinities whose infinity is constrained by the typology of divine moods. Rather than the neutral void, nothingness is the bad sublime which appears through a psychological reaction to modern life as well as an relation to external nature. Although nature appears as trauma, it also appears either as an object of the archive or in diminutive, domestic shape. James is on the threshold of the loss of nature's wonder.

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[168] Alain Badiou, 'Philosophy and Mathematics: Infinity and the End of Romanticism' (1992), in Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano (eds.), *Alain Badiou: Theoretical Writings*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 26-7, p. 37.

Adams' addition is that ecological preservation is a necessary component of religious futurity, toward which end the archive is positive to the extent that it is delimited by the paternal absolute. The good archive contains photographs which are the product of a good contingency encountered by a masculine master of photographic craft. The bad archive contains a proliferation of images without transcendental potency which is connected to feminine labour and contingent production. What also takes the place of bad contingency is unconstrained technological advance – Adams' practice is designed to reconnect the technological ad infinitum to the absolute through the happy contingencies of transcendental unity.

Badiou's task is not only to "re-entangle" philosophy and mathematics as thoughts of the infinite, but to re-entangle them with a neutered form of contingency in their process of endless, nonlinear unfolding.[169] Thus Badiou appears to take seriously the transparency of mathematics outside "the sophistical tyranny of language", and its power to "terminate the power of myths", including "the myth of the painful absence of myths".[170] As indicated from Plato's association of mathematics, dialectics and paternal constancy, the infinites are historically and culturally encoded by gender. I say this because, in the subsequent chapter, Hollis Frampton's engagement with mathematics indicates issues with the mythic idea that scientific discourse could ever be so neutered. In contrast to Badiou's secularism, Frampton's reading of set-theory mathematics exhibits an incipient romanticism in which the 'set of all sets' is necessarily something

[169] Alain Badiou, 'Mathematics and Philosophy: The Grand Style and the Little Style' (Undated MS), in *Theoretical Writings*, p. 19.

[170] Badiou, 'Philosophy and Mathematics', p. 27, p. 38, p. 37. In Badiou's axiomatics, Derrida would appear too mired in the endless procrastinations of self-criticism. Although there is, certainly, a propensity toward prolonged exegesis in deconstructive practice, it too has a 'pragmatic' dimension – for example: Derrida's 'simple' affirmation of "absolute forgiveness" in the context of South Africa.

like the ironisation of god. It is partly this romanticism which places Frampton as the direct heir of American modernism, but as I will argue, inheritance is determined by the parricidal logic of filiation. If Adams represents the deprioritisation of infinite detail in its positivist and religious forms, Frampton represents its more complete displacement by the forces of the archival ad infinitum. And, if Adams represents fractures within the maniacal obliteration of mourning for the mother and the father, Frampton' practice revolves precisely and self-consciously around these figures.

CHAPTER 5 –
The Question of the Exit:
The Gender Politics of the Archival Ad Infinitum
in the Structuralist Film and Photographics of Hollis Frampton.

Introductory Note – Impurity and the Foreclosure of Telos: the Appropriation of Feminine Contingency.

In the year that the book of Adams' exhibition *This is the American Earth* (1955) was published, Frampton (1936-1984) produced the photographic series *Ways to Purity* (1959).[1] If both works share a concern with the relation between chaos and order, *Ways to Purity* destabilises the kind of claims made in Adams' transcendentalism. Adams, figure of the anachronistic embattlement of nineteenth-century philosophical positions with technological modernity, is a producer and pragmatic manager of photographic archives. Frampton, anachronistically attached to literary and photographic modernism in his own time, is a consumer of archives – in order to produce a synoptic and finite image of their relation to the infinite. The question of this chapter resides in Frampton's engagement of infinities with the discourse of industrial and psychological repetition: to what extent does this revalorisation of the ad infinitum produce a concomitant shift in the historical gendering of that endlessness ?

Ways to Purity is a 'set' of twelve images made on the walk from Frampton's apartment to Frank Stella's studio above the Purity Diner. Partly about the inability not to see meaning (divested of intentionality) in chaos, each image finds contingent visual resemblance between an urban surface and an aesthetic or other reference. The theme of prefiguration is also present in Frampton's photo-text work *Adsumus Absumus* (1982) – fossils and photographs appear as 'natural copies' (Talbot) in which nature appears on the verge of consciousness.[2] The work is thus positioned within liminal spaces of impurity which impact upon three metanarratives and their respective ends. Firstly, the

[1] For a general description of this work, to which this section is indebted, see Bruce Jenkins, 'The "Other Work" of Hollis Frampton: A Tour', in Bruce Jenkins and Susan Krane, *Hollis Frampton: Recollections / Recreations*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1984, pp. 19-20.
[2] See Frampton's text for the photowork *Adsumus Absumus* (1982), Jenkins and Krane, *Recollections*, p. 92.

passage toward formal perfection which secondly is ironised by its destination as a commodity – uniqueness is a market value.[3] In this sense, the ordering device of each metanarrative, while ironised by its counterpart, is also disrupted by the impurity of the elements of the set – telos and totality are foreclosed. Thirdly, although the pathway of religious purity is not overdetermined in the work, its implication is endorsed by the religious inflection of later works.

Fig.51: Hollis Frampton, *Thompson at Spring Street*, image no. 2 / 12 from *Ways to Purity* (1959), monochrome photograph, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2".

The reference to Barnet Newman – whose mysticism would open up the encounter with chaos as an issue of the sublime – reverses the painting: memory resides in the field of ball-marks, rather than in the zip (fig.51). In such references to male artists, Frampton emasculates purity by indicating the contingent and marketable production of aesthetic form. Each image is a contingent detail employed for parricidal destabilisation – the creation of a position of strength. The series repeats the gendering

[3] Benjamin Buchloh (ed.), *Carl Andre / Hollis Frampton: 12 Dialogues – 1962-1963*, New York: The Press of the Novia Scotia College of Art and Design and New York University Press, 1981, p. 33.

of the sublime, where feminine contingency is courted toward the resolution of the second moment: only in order for the son (Frampton) to oust the father (Newman).

If the religious undertone appears more than submerged, there is support for a secular reading of Frampton. Henderson remarks in the context of Frampton's unfinished film *Magellan* that "Joyce's stress on secularity, shared by Frampton and articulated in his writings, deflects the possibility of a religious interpretation."[4] However, reference to other works indicates a consistent preoccupation with the transcendental in its various forms. Conversely then, Weiss argues that the film *Zorn's Lemma* (1970) represents the infinite disorders of worldly lists as subsets of the infinite comprehension of the maximal order of God.[5] The reading pursued in this chapter operates between these interpretations, albeit not in a synthetic sense: Frampton will be characterised by an axiomatic of incessant oscillation between these poles.

§ 1 – Photography In and Around *12 Dialogues*.

Note 1 – Gesture Toward the Masculinity of Minimalism.

Situated within the nascence of minimalism, the relation of Frampton and Andre's *12 Dialogues* to the infinites may be gauged from the figure of Brancusi, who also exerts influence on Weston and Pound as part of Frampton's cultural background.[6] On one hand, Brancusi's polished forms represent an attachment to idealism, the ethereality

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[4] Brian Henderson, 'Propositions for the Exploration of Frampton's *Magellan*', in *October* 32, Spring 1985, p. 135, p. 140.

[5] Allen Weiss, 'Frampton's Lemma, Zorn's Dilemma', *October* 32, Spring 1985, p. 124. Frampton's filmic practice concerns "ordered systems which are subsets of a *disordered* universal cinema". Eisenstein directs toward collective revolutionary practice, Frampton to "the imaginary of *individual* consciousness" (p. 121). Such individualism is evident in comparison to Kristeva: as much as the poetic is defined by relations to the infinites, the state claims to be the set of all sets. See John Lechte, *Julia Kristeva*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 117, pp. 114-8.

[6] See Anne Hammond, *Ansel Adams: Divine Performance*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, p. 164, n. 7, n. 56.

of Platonic forms – the absolute. On the other, *Endless Column* indicates pure extension, although this ad infinitum is not terminated by a domestic roof, but is directed heavenwards – it too is directed toward the perfection of the absolute. Andre's debt to the column is incontrovertible in the 'ladder' sculptures. From these, the implication of infinite extension is attached to other pieces marked by formal repetition and to the assisted ready-mades as signs of industrial production. This, of course, is minimalism's general move: to attach the 'limitless' possibilities of aesthetic formal development to industrialism; to shift from the absolute to the ad infinitum.[7]

Andre's linkage of the industrial to the insistent repetitions of desire may be prone to accusations of attachment to the masculine. If Andre stands as theoria to Frampton's archon, as I will argue around *12 Dialogues*, the erotic propositions of *Lever* (1966) and *Herm* (1960) fall within the remit of Irigaray's reading of the paternal eye: "the gaze – and the theory, the *théoria* – must be protected by being resolved into a phallomorphic representation [...] considered [...] only 'in regard to' the shape of the male sex organ."[8] Similarly, Andre's sporadic metaphorics of "progeny", "sons", and "seeds" could be seized upon as a matter of masculine spermatics.[9] The gender-political dimension of Frampton's thought is hinted where literary narrative is "like an ovum fertilised by our attention"; this kind of reproductive analogy being compounded by

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[7] In the description of Smith's experience of the New Jersey Turnpike, "being able to go on and on indefinitely is the essence. What replaces the object – what does the same job of distancing or isolating the beholder, of making him a subject [...] – is above all the endlessness, or objectlessness, of the approach or onrush of perspective". Here Fried resists the endless industrial sublime, defending the instantaneous reception of painting's presence. See Michael Fried, 'Art and Objecthood' (1967), in Gregory Battcock (ed.), *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (1968), Berkeley: University of California Press 1995, p. 134, pp. 144-5. For an entry into the problematic relations between minimalisms and capital see Rosalind Krauss, 'The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum', *October* 54, Fall 1990.

[8] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 80. Nevertheless, the horizontal engagement with the gravity and ground makes this less a simple phallicism.

[9] See Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 38, p. 55, p. 43; p. 30, p. 31, p. 67.

reference to Aristotle's equivalence of gonads and brain, and the optic fibres as spermatic channels.[10] Frampton's photography from this period is riddled with subjects from the paternal canon of modernism. In his documentation of Andre's work, sculptural predecessors (Brancusi and Rodchenko) find themselves veiled in Strand's machine portraits (paean to the expressive possibilities of technology), and Weston's early photographs of machinery buildings (the erotic possibilities of industrial form). In both these cases, technology is the means and object of an expressive synthesis which is couched in a masculine rhetoric: these objects are, in aesthetic discourse at least, the possible conveyors of masculine connotations – certainly, Judy Chicago's reminiscences of this period place industrial production and machinery in a landscape of masculine labour.[11] Where the ad infinitum of capital and industry was historically considered effeminising, its association with the erotic could represent its attempted masculinisation.[12]

In addition to the intersection of industrial and erotic repetition, *12 Dialogues* is significantly constructed at the intersection of aesthetics and mathematics, and hence, despite the latter's rhetoric of abstract neutrality, it is invested with desire. An understanding of the gender of such desire requires some preparatory definitions: of the relation between set-theory and photography constituted by the concept of the "cut"; of photographic exposure as a cut within the archives of photographic tradition; and of the relation between these archives and the repetitions of desire.

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[10] Hollis Frampton, 'A Pentagram for Conjuring the Narrative' (1972); Hollis Frampton, 'Incisions in History / Segments of Eternity' (1974), in Hollis Frampton, *Circles of Confusion: Film / Photography / Video / Texts 1968-1980*, Rochester NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1983, p. 65; p. 91.

[11] Judy Chicago, 'Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist' (1975), abridged in James Meyer (ed.), *Minimalism*, London: Phaidon Press, 2000, pp. 264-5.

[12] For an entry into the gender-politics of minimalism, see Anna Chave, 'Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power' (1990), in Meyer, *Minimalism*.

Note 2 – Dedekind and Zorn: the Cut in the Mathematical and the Aesthetic.

In *12 Dialogues*, mathematics stands for a definition of art as an "open set" – a figure of endless permutation.[13] The dialogues define the basic elements of art media, but not as a simple material presence: for Andre's Constructivist bias, sculptural form creates a cut in space; the photograph is a cut in space and time – thus both media are defined by a common element which derives from aesthetics and from Dedekind's axiom concerning the division of line.[14] The cutting of the line into two sets is only constituted by the difference between the points; perception is "a cut across the spectrum of stimuli available", present but empty in itself, "an operation, not a quantity".[15] Frampton's film *Zorn's Lemma* (1970) extends Dedekind in order to account for the totality of the work:

> All cuts, the operations whereby they are made, the elements that constitute each of them, and the intelligible species of their distinctness one from another, AND the residue of totally unordered elements left outside the maximal fully ordered set, constitute a closed field. Until all operations are defined and applied, and all elements identified, the field is not closed.[16]

This description is key for understanding the relation between totality and endlessness in Frampton's oeuvre – given that these are historically gendered traits: it is characterised by a tension between the 'closed field' and disordered endlessness. Important in this tension is the difference between the sensuous and intellectual

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[13] See Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 34, p. 15.

[14] "If all points of a straight line fall into two classes, such that every point of the first class lies to the left of any point of the second class, then there exists one and only one point which produces this division of all points into two classes, this severing of the straight line into two portions". Cited in Annette Michaelson, 'Time Out of Mind: A Foreword', Frampton, *Circles*, p. 17.

[15] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 55. The cut is hence between the phenomenal and nonphenomenal. If each sculpture creates its own space, then space is heterogenous and discontinuous – the effect of Dedekind's thought too for Badiou. See Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano (eds.), *Alain Badiou: Theoretical Writings*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 75-6, p. 65.

[16] Reno Odlin (ed.), 'Letters from Framp 1958 -1968' (1 Apr 1964), *October* 32, p. 47.

apprehension of the work in terms of the possession of knowledge as to the elements of the closed field. For example: the 'one second' cuts of Zorn's Lemma may be twenty-three or twenty-five frames long – their appearance as seconds indicates the normativity of temporal experience; although duration is an elastic product of the complexity of the image.[17] Frampton's temporal toying represents an intellectual attention to nuance which indicates a distance to the expressivity of nuance in photographic modernism. At the time of *12 Dialogues*, this distance is nascent: there is a contradiction between plastic and citational nuance which bears upon the gender-politics of modernism.

Note 3 – Contradictions in Frampton's Relation to Weston: Implications for Gender.

In terms of this photographic tradition, Frampton's photographic practice is oddly within and without, affirmative and ironic, absorptive and parricidal. The medium-specific description of photography combines Weston's rhetoric of previsualisation by name with an implicit indication of Adams, given references to the zone system and to the metaphorical equivalence of photographic and musical tone.[18] In this retrospective note (1977), Frampton refers to the move into photography between 1958 and 1959.

> I liked to do things with machines so I took up still photography, which seemed to offer that advantage, that of mediation, that of signaturelessness, of a certain kind at least. The signature was in such things as framing and tonal scalings, abstractions as imperceptible as the infinitely thin clear line. So that one was not, as it were, the person hovering behind the artifact but rather behind the thing that made the artifact.

[17] See Peter Gidal, 'Interview with Hollis Frampton, London, May 24th 1972', *October* 32, p. 97.
[18] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 33, p. 73, p. 70.

> And on the other hand, one did not have to laboriously build up this image. It was not made serially but came forward as a kind of matrix of thought instantaneously, in a manner that criticized the maker [...].[19]

Here Frampton is evidently attached to the possibilities of nuance emanating from infinite detail. Weston also provides the pretext for photographing the mundane as if invested with higher meaning – as in *Supper on oilcloth* (1959). Without recognising its masculine appropriation of femininity, Frampton refers to the intuitive moment of previsualised formal satisfaction, asserting that formal structure is for the "intellect".[20] But this appears in a sense somewhat exterior to Weston's rhetoric. Made in 1964, the ninth photograph of Frampton's film *Nostalgia* (1971) refers to *Excusado* (1925), repositioning it within the quotidian and art-historical – hence the elevation of the urinals to Calvary.[21] (fig.52).

Fig.52: Hollis Frampton, *Untitled* (1964), image no. 9 / 14 from *The Nostalgia Portfolio* (1971), monochrome photograph 9 1/2" x 7 1/2".

[19] Jenkins and Krane, *Recollections*, p. 111.
[20] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, pp. 60-1.
[21] See Jenkins and Krane, *Recollections*, p. 64.

What is previsualised is not only tonal values, but multiple layers of art-historical reference – a parodic extension of Weston.[22] If Weston's middle period is characterised by close-ups of objects within neutralised space, *The Portrait of an Indifferently Attractive Young Lady* (1959) inverts the function of the backdrop: rather than neutralising actual space, the burlap indicates Andre's studio practice – the shapes on the material are the negative impression left by the painting of the dog-turd sculptures, just as the photograph gives a two-dimensional rendition of a concealed body (fig.53).

Fig.53: Hollis Frampton, *The Portrait of an Indifferently Attractive Young Lady (Rosemarie Castoro)* (1959), monochrome photograph.

[22] In Frampton's correspondence, Odlin writes that the ways to purity are "attrition", noting the images' "lack of ocular nourishment", and the "*decay* of appetitive faculty". Odlin, 'Letters from Framp', pp. 53-4.

There is something of a distance from the eroticist surveillance of Weston's practice, which turns upon an alternate image of femininity: *The Portrait* links to Andre's implication of the rarity of a woman "indifferent to the shine on her nose".[23] The suggestion of vanity is hypocritical in comparison to the intellectualism that the dialogues polish, but it is not unmeditated.[24] "Nor am I", types Frampton – the photograph, with the blanket emphasising the face (and the detail of the nose), quotes fetishism, and thus masculine castration anxiety.[25]

Note 4 – Cosmophagous Photographics (the Swallowing of the World): Infinite Photographs and Finite Synopses.

In a move which includes Weston, Frampton emasculates commercial and epiphanic photographers – singular moments are the product of retrospective selection from "voluminous" contact sheets which swallow the world ("cosmophagous") – an effectively archival activity.[26] As the inclusiveness of commercial and epiphanic indicates, the photographic tradition with which the cut intersects is defined by Frampton as "what has been done". Such description retracts from canonical aesthetic judgements of the type permeating the moderns. The impetus is to make photographs which are not simply reiterative, but "imperfections" – a transformative repetition of tradition's clichés.[27]

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[23] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 60.

[24] The title ambivalently suggests Castoro's indifference to the shine and masculine indifference to her attractiveness – though she was Andre's partner at the time.

[25] See Sigmund Freud, 'Fetishism' (1927), in *On Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey, Penguin Freud Library Vol. 7, London: Penguin, 1991, p. 351.

[26] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 62. Strangely, Lartigue is not mentioned in this regard.

[27] Ibid., p. 57, p. 55, p. 62. Nevertheless, where mass media is related to repetition, recognisability, the "shit on a plate" that "the public" eat, Frampton's relation to such repetition smells of incipient class-cultural stratifications. See Michael Newman, 'Recovering Andre: Remarks arising from the Symposium', in Ian Cole (ed.), *Carl Andre and the Sculptural Imagination*, Oxford: Museum of Modern Art Papers, Vol. 2, 1996.

In this sense, the photographic series *The Secret World of Frank Stella* (1958-1962) is a self-conscious practice of citation referring to aesthetic or vernacular styles.[27] This series was arranged in four groups of thirteen, comprising a total which refers to the weeks of the year and to a deck of cards.[28] At one stroke, the full 'set' of photographs refers to order and segmentation and to the feminine attributes of contingency and chance. But the former also refers to return, repetition, and circularity – an ad infinitum. The sign of order and closure, like that in *Ways to Purity*, is at once the sign of opening. Just as *Ways to Purity* provides a plethora of referents which appear to trouble the closure of the restraining metanarratives, *The Secret World* indicates that the neat closure of the year does not provide a replete set: Zorn's 'closed field' is displaced.

The series is partly a response to a contemporary publication, Duncan's *The Private World of Pablo Picasso* (1959).[29] Their meeting was initiated by Duncan's gift of a ring inscribed with Picasso's symbol of phallic creativity (the cockerel). The resulting book is cosmophagous in extremis: the product of 10,000 negatives whose selection (of about 375 exposures on 176 pages). This sperm-count of images indicates a failure of judgement whose 'epiphanies' stem from emotional hyperboles rammed home by the notes; but the collection is better represented where the maestro crouches to pick up a paint cup. The attempt to wrest the interiority of creative genius through the exposure of the private turns the domicile into an exfoliation of endless reproductions, a delirium of banality. Frampton's distance from this mode of aesthetic production is

[27] Jenkins, 'The "Other Work"', p. 18.
[28] Ibid., p. 17, p. 32, n. 7. The origin of this organisation actually appears to be in Andre's experimental poetry of 1960, with "52 terms in four suites or seasons" – see Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 77.
[29] Noted by Jenkins, 'The "Other Work"', p. 17.

marked in the use of clichéd repetition, but this is not to say that the intellectual endeavour of Frampton's work may not be coded masculine.

Jenkins notes an inversion: Duncan meets Picasso for the first time in the bathtub; the last image of *The Secret World* ends with Stella similarly disposed.[30] But this 'final' image refers also to Andre's assisted ready-made *A Marat* (1959). The photograph is comprised of citational cuts between Duncan, Andre, images of Marat, etc. Ultimately the 'final' image indicates an endless extent of referents and their interrelations. Another inversion may be that the opening title of Frampton's series appears to echo the final sentence of the book, which pathetically claims Picasso's essence "[e]s un cosa *muy* rara" as the "answer to everyman's secret, wondering question about life itself".[31] The secrets of Frampton's work are less the idiosyncrasy of Stella's psyché, and more the multiple referents of the images.

But in this presentation of referents, there is a difference to Weston. Frampton quotes Charis Wilson's description of Weston's love of photographic "coded messages", "ambiguous accounts", and the "conundrum" of Atget.[32] As Frampton asserts, the answers to such secrets are withheld from the viewer as part of the exercise of Weston's paternal power – the viewer is given the presentiment of final meaning, tantalised by the secreting of the closed field. This effect is implied in the image referencing Atget – *New Name* (1963) – in *Nostalgia* (1971) (fig.54). In their display of recognisable clichés, Frampton's works also function like *The Wasteland*, requiring the recipient to accede to the totality of referents in order to reconstitute the closed field of

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[30] Ibid.
[31] "It's a *very* crazy business". David Duncan, *The Private World of Pablo Picasso: The Intimate Photographic Profile of the World's Greatest Artist*, New York: The Ridge Press, 1958, p. 160.
[32] Hollis Frampton 'Impromptus on Edward Weston: Everything in its Place', (1978), in Frampton, *Circles*, p. 159.

cultural identity. In this sense, Frampton risks this intellectual endeavour where the work provides a finite synopsis of profligate images.

Fig.54: Hollis Frampton, *"New Name"* (1963), image no. 8 / 14 from *The Nostalgia Portfolio* (1971), monochrome photograph 9 1/2" x 7 1/2".

Note 5 – The Archival Impression: The Photograph as a Cut Through Archival Practice.

To understand the relation between this indication of endless photographs and infinite archival accumulation in a more determined sense, it is necessary to pass through a number of tropes which are brought into relation by the figure of the ad infinitum: the impression of the archive; and its relation to the figure of the crystal in its relation to desire.

In the dialogues' strategic play, Andre states that the photographer is first and foremost an experiencer of vision, and secondarily a preserver of sight.[33] In terms of classical philosophy, the photographer should then be a theoria before an archon. In Frampton's rejoinder, Galvan dies and the photograph remains, but the sand at Point Lobos will outlast its photograph. The ability to conserve is thus greater than human life, but limited by its horizon of finitude.[34] But the photograph is excessive – an addition to "the list of visible things" which is "no substitute" for them, but resides in "dusty vaults".[35] As a substitute, the photograph is a fetish – as in Freud, its archive is a "memorial" to the (missing female) phallus, and masculine castration anxiety.[36]

Andre claims that Frampton's archiving, in terms of *The Wedding Feast of the Sewer Pipes* (1962), is both materially and politically conservative. Frampton's attachment to Weston partially proves this point: the image links industrial and erotic repetition, marking an awkward attempt to mediate modern photography and minimalism. The photograph preserves the moment before "clean" forms are buried beneath the wheels of "polymorphous" Fords, industry not recognising aesthetic quality: there is an attachment to simple masculine forms against formlessness. At a formal level, the wriggly pipes exhibit a kind of orgiastic masculinity; despite their hollowness

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[33] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 21, p. 70.

[34] Subject to "moth and rust", the decay of the photograph does not impugn it as art; and the question of archival permanence is tied right into money. See Hollis Frampton, 'Digressions on the Photographic Agony' (1972), in Frampton, *Circles*, p. 190, p. 183.

[35] Ibid., p. 23, p. 70, p. 79, p. 21. Further research should account for Levine and Lawler's 'A Photograph Is No Substitute for Anything' (1982), since *12 Dialogues* is clearly its titular model, and its structural precursor, given the curatorial dialogue between the two artists and the shared concern with a holistic comprehension of the circulation of art. Frampton's statement ("A photograph is no substitute for anything") is sandwiched between his own thought of the archive and Andre's thoughts on painting. Non-recognition of this context pushes toward a critique of "the fetish-status of painting", deleting the archive as an object within the institutional matrix of art. See Abigail Solomon-Godeau, 'Living with Contradictions: Critical Practices in the age of Supply-Side Aesthetics', in Carol Squiers (ed.), *Over Exposed: Essays on Contemporary Photography*, New York: The New Press, 1999, p. 256, n. 17.

[36] Freud, 'Fetishism', p. 353.

they present the "pregnant phallus".[37] If their traditional referent is Nadar's sewer images, there is a speculative connection to the association of the feminine and the womb of the earth (fig.55).

Fig.55: Hollis Frampton, *The Wedding Feast of the Sewer Pipes* (1962), monochrome photograph.

Such visual reference attempts a critical function: in Frampton's response to Andre's 'theorism', what the photograph conserves is not only its material object, but a "petrified way of seeing".[38] For Frampton, the photograph may be a cut in Andre's sense, but it is also a cut into the history of photography and its epistemologies of vision, an incision into the archives of photographic seeing. The cut is cut between a now and a then. Photographic seeing is thus epistemological and archival.

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[37] Brian Elsea, *Fathering the Unthinkable: Masculinity, Scientists and the Nuclear Arms Race*, London: Pluto Press, 1983, pp. 58-9.
[38] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 57.

> My photographs of your work constitute a kind of mug-book. They are 'after' Bertillon: the subject is backed up in the hard light against a ruler and photographed front and right profile.[39]

In some photographs, the front and profile images are collapsed into a diagonal view – of an industrial form which is redolent of anthropological fetishes (fig.56).

Fig.56: Hollis Frampton, *Untitled,* monochrome photograph of Carl Andre, *Found Steel Object Sculpture* (1960-61).

The images reek of Strand's machine portraits, but do not offer a synthesis of expression and technology; nor do the assisted ready-mades offer Strand's idiosyncratic subject, but the articulation of permutations which can be understood by "any man".[40] The image is thus archival in a doubled sense: it preserves, for consigning objects to the

[39] Ibid., p. 65.
[40] Ibid., p. 79, p. 70.

archive, and it mines the archives of photographic tradition for archival practices. In this sense, Frampton stands as the archon to Andre's theoria. To bear witness to seeing (as the theoria) is already to have been determined by the politics of an epistemology (as the archon). Frampton's strategy is to expose the embedded, archival mediations of intuition – the infinite speed of the immediate.[41]

Frampton has a critical relation to the archives of the visual, but there is no simple exterior position. If Bertillon indicates the forensic archive – surveillance, taxonomy and totality – it is reflected where Frampton's cuts accumulate into an archival impression which connotes nostalgia, order, and completion: a fetish archive.

> The white surround inhibits confusion between photographs and their (and our) ambient sea of things. The cardboard lets us handle the fairly delicate objects with some freedom. [....] I confess that one of my recurring fantasies is to have, in my old age, cabinetted Japanese walls stacked full of uniformly mounted prints.[42]

This archival image of the closed field effectively equates to Weston's Vault. As *The Secret World* indicates, the sign of closure is at once the sign of a return, repetition, endlessness or indetermination. Since one of the prime metanarratives for Frampton is that of religious redemption, the disruption of the closed field also bears on the containing function of the figure of the macrocosm, which is also indicated in *Magellan*:

> each thing implies the universe, whose most obvious trait is complexity; on that principle, I conceive, distantly, of an art of cinema that might encode thought as compactly as the human genetic substance encodes our entire physical body.[43]

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[41] See Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 68.
[42] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 57.
[43] Frampton, cited in Henderson, 'Propositions', p. 146. For a basic description of *Magellan*, and other films, see Steve Anker, 'Rupturing Boundaries: Radical Filmmakers of the Sixties', in Sabine Breitwiesser (ed.), *White Cube / Black Box*, Vienna: EA-Generali Foundation, 1996, pp. 314-7.

There is then, a relation between microcosm (sub-sets) and macrocosm (meta-set) which proffers the possibility of epistemological totality, and thus Frampton betrays an attachment to the archival phallus.

Note 6 – Crystals: Desire, Industry, and the Photographic Archive.

12 Dialogues refers to crystalline structures as paradigmatic forms. Frampton relates microscopic inspection of the latticed structure of domestic salt crystals to Andre's poetry, in which opacity may become a window of clarity – an epistemological image.[44] Crystal structure

> is a habit of matter arrested at the level of logic. Logic is an invention for winning arguments [...]. A logical argument cannot change, it can only extend itself into a set of tautological consequences.[45]

A figure of pure extension, ad infinitum, the accretion of the crystal is effectively Frampton's version of Andre's serially repeated cuts in the ladder sculptures: the micrology of the crystal begins to open up as a paradigm for art. Jenkins notes that the hexagonal forms in the first image of *Ways to Purity* and those in *New Name* in *Nostalgia* comprise a "signature" (fig.57).[46] Both indicate infinite tessellation. I should add that Frampton's 'A Pentagram for Conjuring the Narrative' (1972) describes a mythic universe comprised of polyhedral, crystalline shapes. In this way, Jenkins provides the linking points between the dialogues and the later work. For the analysis of Frampton, the figure of the crystal is the operative link between image and text, logic and aesthetics, science and myth, ration and irrationality.

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[44] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 76.
[45] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 43.
[46] See Jenkins, 'The "Other Work"', p. 20.

Fig.57: Hollis Frampton, *448 Broadway*, image no. 1 / 12 from *Ways to Purity* (1959), monochrome photograph, 9 13/16" x 7 3/4".

The crystallisation of historical forces is also a repeated trope in Strand – thus the tautology of the crystal is generative for thinking Frampton's archival desire.[47] As Andre's dubiously homophobic references around Gertrude Stein indicate, linguistic repetition causes the plasticity of the letter, making latent desire manifest. The transformation of Stein's "a rose is a rose" into a grid of accreted repetitions indicates a homology between crystallinity and desire.[48]

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[47] Paul Strand, 'Photography and the New God' (1922), in Alan Trachtenberg (ed.), *Classic Essays on Photography*, New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980, p. 147, p. 149.
[48] Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p. 38.

The archive is enmeshed within this thought of infinite mechanical-erotic accretion – precisely what is effeminising in Weston's self-consciousness. The homogenous collation of uniformly mounted prints is not simply an issue of conservation, handling, or storage, but like 'matter arrested at logic', is a modular repetition indicating endless extension. The implicit grid structure of the archival impression is effectively the photographic form of the grids through which Andre's poems are organised. The impression of the archive is thus twofold: complete, but indicating endlessness. The infinite repetition of desire becomes the motor of the accumulation of the photographic archive and of the swallowing of the world.

§ 2 – On the Paternity of the Figure of the Crystal.

Note 1 – Meditations, Digressions, etc, ...

The development of cosmophagy is given in 'Digressions on the Photographic Agony' (1972), with its vast archive housing a proliferation of images. Its analysis concludes that the Atlanteans (representing photographic culture from Talbot to Stieglitz) performed within a fictional world whose purpose was solely to be photographed: in terms of the spectacle, it is one of Frampton's most fanciful and least fictional writings.[49]

With an epistemological shift, 'Meditations Around Paul Strand' (1972) makes the archival ad infinitum the immanent product of those modern photographies of paternal judgement and control. Frampton collapses the scientific and aesthetic traditions of photography: applying the logic of the taxonomic survey, with its attempt

[49] Frampton, 'Digressions', pp. 177-81.

to provide a synopsis of the visible world, to aesthetic practice, which would otherwise be associated with the singularity of the fine print, the selective and idiosyncratic vision of the artist.[50]

Each negative potentiates "virtually infinite" prints, but this may not be repetition of the same: each may be radically differentiated by nuance – the shift of a single (tonal) value. Such values are "denumerable" elements within the "deliberative structure" of the photograph, but they impact upon the implicit "axiomatic substructure".

> The least discernable modification [...] of contrast or tonality must be violently charged with significance, for it implies a changed view of the universe, and a suitably adjusted theory of knowledge. [....] Carried to its logical outcome, the ambition of this activity can amount to nothing less than the systematic recording of the whole visible world, with a view to its entire comprehension.[51]

Strand's difference from Stieglitz is underlined here – at the structural level the photographer is an archival "gatherer of facts"; at the axiomatic level, an epistemologist rather than "Spirit Medium". Frampton's emphasis on the epistemological, and upon abstracted categories of space and time, is made at the expense of a recognition of the gendered nature of this tradition.

Though Strand's aesthetic should not be reduced to the blatant patriarchy of Stieglitzian Spirit, it is based upon a mode of appropriation differentiated from the feminine – as I have argued around O'Keeffe. Frampton's development of this totalisation of the world is effectively part of an identification with something like the intellectualism that Strand defines as a masculine attribute.

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[50] On the cosmophagy of the survey, see John Taylor, 'The Alphabetic Universe: photography and the picturesque landscape', in Simon Pugh (ed.), *Reading Landscape: Country – City – Capital*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, pp. 186-8.

[51] All preceding: Hollis Frampton, 'Meditations Around Paul Strand' (1972), in *Circles*, p. 129, pp. 131-3.

Note 2 – The Masculinity of the Crystalline: the Infinite Cinema and the Polyhedral Universe.

But the image of an infinite photographic archive has already been eaten by Frampton's 'For a Metahistory of Film' (1971). The historical priority of photography is complicated by its relationship to time – Frampton proposes inversion: cinema precedes photography, its still frames contained within its originary and endless succession:

> I propose to extricate cinema from this circular maze by superimposing on it a second labyrinth (containing an exit) – by positing [...] an infinite cinema.[52]

This infinity is the sum total of cinematic machines and materials. The reconstruction of the universe would hence "resemble the vaults of an endless film archive built to house, in eternal cold storage, the infinite film".[53] Frampton's filmic project at this time is the monumental *Magellan*.[54] The film aims to extend the scope of *Zorn's Lemma*, which makes "open allusion" to "alphabetization and the encyclopaedic tradition", and the "tradition of intellectual inventory, the listing of the contents of the world":

> what I'm building is the largest possible inventory of modes of classifying and perceiving experience. [....] while it is perhaps not possible to generate the knight's tour in chess, the absolute tour of the board, it is possible to make a tour of tours [...]. I cannot generate the infinite cinema that I posited then. But I can generate a grammatically complete synopsis of it.[55]

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[52] Hollis Frampton 'For a Metahistory of Film: Commonplace Notes and Hypotheses' (1971), in *Circles*, p. 111.

[53] Frampton 'Metahistory', pp. 114-5.

[54] Ibid., p. 116.

[55] Frampton, cited in Brian Henderson, 'Propositions', p. 144, p. 140-1. As "grammatically complete" indicates, and although this language is derivative of structuralist film, Frampton is enamoured of toying with something like the commensuration offered by structural linguistics. In the narratological projects of Propp, Bremond, etc, structural "invariants" are drawn from empirical variants – a form of idealisation compared by Schor to Reynolds' idealisation of particularity. See Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, New York and London: Methuen, 1987, p. 15. But *Magellan* attempts to be an archive of filmic consciousness which is not ordered by traditional taxonomy, but by a structuralist mode (palindrome, loop, forms of montage); and a different place of performance from the traditional archive like those in which Frampton researched. See Henderson, 'Propositions', p. 143.

Frampton appears to extend the comprehension immanent in Strand. Against the spectacular proliferation of the image, Frampton aims to totalise empirical infinitude within a 'set of all sets'. But, as the equation of desire and mechanical repetition in *12 Dialogues* indicates, Frampton's addition to the Encyclopaedic tradition is to pass its desire for totality through the filter of psychoanalysis. As Henderson comments, "[t]he return of Magellan's body to its starting point, ready for another cycle, may have provided a desired symmetry for the work, but it also inscribes the wish, diagnosed by Freud, for immortality."[56] The archival image of closure is mirrored by the loop of global circumnavigation: but the fantasised return of Magellan's corpse is not to the same place, because the image of the world has changed.[57] Where the circumnavigational loop stands as a trope for the closure of the archive, Frampton suggests that this meta-archive cannot be produced – as in *Archive Fever*.[58] The loop marks a desire for repetition, a mark of the death-drive – the impossibility of return marks Eros.

Frampton's cartoon of all knowledge indicates a complex desire for totalisation: it attempts to grasp an infinitely complex field; and it abstracts from such complexity, retracting from the actual infinitude of facts.[59] While the historian is enmeshed within the infinity of empirical instances, the metahistorian is "occupied with inventing a tradition".[60] In 'Digressions', from the mass of photographs, "that task is facilitated by

[56] Henderson, 'Propositions', pp. 140-1.
[57] Ibid., pp. 146-7.
[58] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995), trans. Eric Prenowitz, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 68.
[59] See Frampton, 'Metahistory', pp. 108-9.
[60] Ibid., p. 113.

the emergence of axes that gradually crystallize from a saturated solution".[61] For the archivist of infinity, the feminine muse of history is no longer Clio, but Insomnia.[62]

The visual avatar of this feminine figure and of the figure of the crystal, is arguably given in Frampton's interpretation of Etienne-Jules Marey and Thomas Eakins' chronophotography in *A Visitation of Insomnia* (1970-73).

Fig.58: Hollis Frampton, image no. 12 / 24 from *A Visitation of Insomnia* (1970-73), monochrome photograph, 10 3/8" x 10 3/8".

The circularity of the twelfth print repeats in miniature the endless circularity of the hours of day and night indicated by the twenty-four prints. Each print represents the insistent repetition of desire within the ecstatic temporality of an image that is neither chronological nor instantaneous, sleeping or waking (fig.58). The spectral blur of these serial exposures marks the hybrid recognition and denial of time – an attempt not sustained in the history of the image: "[i]t split sharply into an illusionistic cinema of

[61] Frampton, 'Digressions', p. 184.
[62] Frampton, 'Metahistory', p. 107, p. 116.

incessant motion and a static photographic art that remained frozen solid for decades".[63] The blur of Frampton's exposures may thus represent a hybrid solution from which the crystallisation of media emerge.

The relation to femininity is double. On the one hand, Frampton identifies with the feminine muse of Insomnia, an avatar of endlessness. The blurred solution here represents a dissolution of media and the logical opposition of time and space which Frampton positively valorises. On the other, the work is meta-historically synoptic, distanced from the feminine figure of endlessness. In this sense, neither in explicit paternal mode nor in evident critique, Frampton reiterates the classically gendered relation between muse and intellect and the association of endlessness and the feminine: indeterminate solution and finitised crystal are positioned as feminine and masculine.

The paternality of the crystal emerges also through the Darwinism of Frampton's writing of the 1970's, where art comes into being at the point of its functional obsolescence (physical survival), providing an Erotic defence against Thanatos (a form of psychic survivalism). Art is not however defined by man, but in an image which echoes with the first image of *Ways to Purity*, man is defined by it "as hexagonal labyrinths of wax both circumscribe and detail the honeybee".[64] In 'A Pentagram for Conjuring the Narrative' (1972), Frampton extends the figure of the geometric form into the realm of myth – the domestic (salt crystal) is attached to the cosmic.[65] The paper

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[63] Jenkins and Krane, *Recollections*, p. 70.
[64] Frampton, 'Incisions', pp. 89-90.
[65] If *12 Dialogues* asks 'how can one photograph peppers after Weston ?', but photographs supper, including a lemon, Frampton's attempt to escape that heritage by moving into film still refers to it: the seven minute, silent colour film (16fps) *Lemon (for Robert Huot)* (1969) the substitution of the pepper is a pretext for a protracted attention to the photographic paradox: "a voluptuous lemon is devoured by the same light that reveals it, its image passes from the spatial rhetoric of illusion into the spatial grammar of the graphic arts" (Frampton). As the light-source passes around it, it mimics the sun's path over Weston's studio during long exposures, and through this the lemon attains cosmic significance. As a figure of the relation between

reduces filmic narratives to equations which indicate common mythic roots – "axiomatic perimeters" within which thought "prospers best". Each myth is envisaged as a "crystalline regular polyhedron" of which "every facet represents a story". Of the universe of these objects: the ecliptic is occupied by the polyhedron of Father and Son (Odysseus, Hamlet, Oedipus, Agamemnon); the centre by the polyhedron of the Story-Teller (Beckett's trilogy, the Thousand and One Nights, the Decameron, the Canterbury Tales); the margin by the black hole where the polyhedron of the Unknowable, Agnoton, has disappeared.[66]

Through Theon Agnoton, the figure of the infinitely other in negative theology, Frampton appears to have reconnected the ad infinitum of crystal accretion to a thought of the absolute. For Levinas, this 'other of the other' is a paternal transcendental. For Derrida, the 'other of the other' is, logically, the same: the over-affirmation of the transcendental slides into the hither side of representation.[67] Where Derrida's impact upon Levinas is to feminise the paternal transcendental, Frampton's work is characterised by the aporia of totality and endlessness, and would be characterised by an oscillation between masculine and feminine positions.

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microcosm and macrocosm, domestic and cosmic, it will be displaced by the figure of the crystal, which might owe its aesthetic counterpart rather more to the polyhedra of Stella's portrait series (1963). For their installation, see Meyer, *Minimalism*, p. 50.

[66] Frampton 'Pentagram', p. 62, pp. 67-8. If the first polyhedron indicates endless return, the second indicates endless articulation, particularly given Frampton's interest in Borges: "To say *a thousand and one nights* is to add one to infinity". Jorge Luis Borges, *Seven Nights*, London: Faber and Faber, 1984, pp. 45-6.

[67] In Derrida's reading of Levinas, 'humanity' is a patrixal concept which precedes sexual division, placing "masculinity [*le masculin*] in command and at the beginning (the *arché*), on a par with the Spirit" – but it is the dichotomy itself (sexual division) which departs from human essence. See Jacques Derrida and Christie McDonald, 'Choreographies', in *Points ... Interviews, 1974-1994* (1992), trans. Peggy Kamuf et al, Elisabeth Weber (ed.), California: Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 102, pp. 463-4, n. 6. See also Jacques Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas' (1964), in Alan Bass (ed.), *Writing and Difference*, London: Routledge, 1978, pp. 114-5, p. 119, pp. 126-7. See Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1993, pp. 219-21.

§ 3 – Trauma and Repetition.

Note 1 – The Nostalgia of Trauma: Granular Indeterminacy as a Mode of the Feminine Sublime.

The problematic of deity may be partially displaced into alternate terms: just as the polyhedral universe reflects the psychic interior, a traumatic and unspeakable event internal to the subject takes the place of an exterior ineffability in *Nostalgia* (1971). This film marks a solidification of the mounting displacement of affective tonal expression in favour of intellectual citation indicated in *12 Dialogues*. However, if Frampton's work after the period of *12 Dialogues* tends to obviate expressivity in its aesthetic form, this is not to say that it obviates affect in its psychological form.

The shift is indicated by Annette Michaelson where the darkness of *Nostalgia* and *Poetic Justice* (1972) destabilise the overmapping of aesthetics and mathematics.[68] Similarly, *Zorn's Lemma* utilises the "temptation" of the alphabet (Barthes) – a "euphoric" way of dispensing with decision. But the supplementary effects of meaning that come with its unmotivated arbitration "carry a charge of malice", a violence tending toward a murder which is never acknowledged.[69] I should note that the monologue of *Nostalgia* is inflected by quotidian forms of the sexual tension of *Poetic Justice*. These domesticated images of desire and social friction are subsisted by the presentiment of sublime trauma.

In *Nostalgia*, Frampton reinscribes the sublime within the traumatic; a move which is evidenced in the displacement of infinite detail into the terrain of the detail qua blow-up. The contingency of street photography spoils an intended composition, but the

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[68] Annette Michaelson, 'Time Out of Mind', p. 18.
[69] Annette Michaelson, 'Frampton's Sieve', *October* 32, pp. 162-3.

photograph is nevertheless taken in "perverse" desire. As a result of a chance arrangement of reflective surfaces, a "tiny detail" is noted whilst printing the negative.

> I have enlarged this small section of my negative enormously. The grain of the film all but obliterates the features of the image. It is obscure; by any possible reckoning, it is hopelessly ambiguous. Nevertheless, what I *believe* I see recorded, in that speck of film, fills me with such fear, such utter dread and loathing, that I think I shall never dare to make another photograph again. Here it is ! Look at it ! Do you see what I see ?[70]

There is no image corresponding to this text, yet the film's loop refers it to the initial darkroom image – the site of the encounter. The absent image becomes the mark of an impenetrable privacy, a pure idiosyncrasy inverted by its clichéd repetition of Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1966). The moment posits a liminal state between a number of poles: the contingency of the environment and the determinations of desire; the unconscious detail of the image and the subject's imposition of belief; objectivity and subjectivity. Between these, Frampton posits a space which disrupts the relation between detail and fragment in Schor's reading of Hegel's *Aesthetik*: details, and the illusion they collectively produce, are not simultaneously phenomenally accessible.[71] If in Barthes, as in Frampton, the 'reality effect' relies upon reading the image at a "proper distance", Hegel's myopic inspection of painting enters the pure facticity of singular colours which have no "gleam" to themselves, only in their play of differences.[72] For Hegel, while animation emerges from difference, it is in the service of paternal totality: the detail is purposively directed toward the fragment, which is itself synecdochally

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[70] Jenkins and Krane, *Recollections*, p. 69.
[71] Schor, *Reading in Detail*, pp. 28-9.
[72] Ibid., p. 41. Buchloh, *12 Dialogues*, p.72. A position within Weston's pragmatic relation to infinite detail. See Nancy Newhall (ed.), *The Daybooks of Edward Weston*, Second Edition, New York: Aperture Foundation, 1990, p. 59.

attached to the whole. This relation is opposed by Frampton's sublime delirium which emerges from the point where infinite definition fails and conflicts with the image-detail, inciting endless indeterminacy. Rather than the technological facticity of grain, or the play of its differences, Frampton poses the horror of formlessness – a formlessness historically attached to the feminine. As Schor describes the particularity of the unidealised;

> nature is a living museum of horrors, a repository of genetic aberrations, which can take the form of lack *(deficiencies)* or excess *(excresences)* – the logic of the particular is the logic of the supplement.[73]

In *Nostalgia*, the regress of infinite detail gives way to 'the detail', and rather than its political potentiality in Benjamin, it opens onto traumatic indeterminacy.[74] In Derrida's 'Right of Inspection' (1985), the complicity of photography and psychoanalysis is marked in Benjamin by their historical concurrence: both are discourses of the detail -

> arts of magnification. One becomes adept at enlarging or magnifying the minute and discrete element. Thus, whether deliberately or not, it necessarily becomes possible to idealise it, to dematerialise or spiritualise it, to charge it with significance. [....] Nothing escapes the "magnifier", since there is only detail. The effect of a whole is always seen reinserted within a part [...].[75]

Details are liminal (parerga, rather than points) and thus constitute the unfinite.[76]

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[73] Schor, *Reading in Detail*, p. 16.

[74] Infinite detail in the history of photography, referring to medium (grainlessness) as much as to objects which may appear through it is not the same as "the detail" as a visual object in Derrida's sense. But intersecting with Benjamin's sense of the optical unconscious, it is clearly part of the discourse of infinite detail. If Frampton's later work will force these two forms apart, *Nostalgia* marks their liminal interstice.

[75] Jacques Derrida, 'Right of Inspection' (1985), in Jacques Derrida and Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Right of Inspection*, New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998, p. xviii, p. xxiii, p. vi, p. xxiii. Page numbers refer to the French original which appears as image within the unpaginated translated text.

[76] Ibid., p. vi. On the parergon (a frame which cuts and joins – a limit on the concept of limit, and thus of the concept *per se*) in Kant see Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (1978), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

The fragmentary particularity of the detail resists "the whole", a "general theory", the panoptic principle – precisely the finite synopsis that Frampton both seeks and displaces. Similarly for Derrida, the 'withdrawal' of the whole "reproduces" the "spectre" of the whole: the detail archives a relation to the universal.[77] The detail is related to the gender politics of the archive where the recess of the "primal chamber" is associable to domesticity, as much as to the camera, the camera obscura, and the chamber of law *(in camera)* – the domicile of the archons in *Archive Fever*, that is: the archive. Against this law, the photograph is the "tableaux of the shattered tablet" – a mosaic fragment rather than the monolith of Mosaic law.[78] Against the paternal recesses Derrida maintains a residual connection between femininity and retraction here – the photograph is "*mise en demeure*": as much as this refers to serving notice of the law, the photograph is positioned in silence.[79] Derrida contrasts the "domesticity of a single story" to the endless labyrinth of possible relations between fragments: the domestic is a site of singularisation and paternal control – "house arrest".

Graft 6 – The Femininity of the Archival Ad Infinitum: Hegel.

As with gendered photographic forms, the control of feminine endlessness is played out in the domestic politics in §166 of *The Philosophy of Right*. Its denigration of the feminine is connected to Hegel's denigration of the archive – precisely in that it is connected to the mechanicity of written memory and to the infinite particularity of things in the world, an infinity which is feminine in its deferral of totality. Hegel produces an image of femininity as a recess: the vocation of woman, a familial piety

[77] Derrida, 'Right of Inspection', pp. xxiii-xxiv.
[78] Ibid., p. vii, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.
[79] Ibid., pp. i-ii.

which consigns woman to the domestic scene, is dependent upon a law which is arcane, secreted, "chthonic" and "in opposition to the public law" of masculinity.[81] If the 'good' form of this recessing is Sophocles' Antigone, the very passivity of woman also opposes paternal order: "contingent inclination" endangers the public sphere and state.[82] Woman, determined as an aesthetic object (of "taste and delicacy") by the paternal survey, is similarly restricted from the universality that is art.[83]

This gender opposition is implicitly iterated at an archival level. Whereas the rights of civil society must be "compiled" in the symbols of "boundary stones", "mortgage books and property registers", the unspoken law of the feminine cannot be so inscribed (§ 217 Addition).[84] The law of the feminine, thus, does not have an archive in the material sense. And, if the "education of women takes place imperceptibly, as if through the atmosphere of representational thought, more through living than through the acquisition of knowledge", then women are restricted from the archives of knowledge, and to interiorising the domestic scene (§ 166 Addition).[85] The feminine

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[81] Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1821), Allen Wood (ed.), H. Nisbet (trans), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. See also §356 (pp. 378-9) where Hegel notes that the Greek concept of the relation between finite and infinite exists as a "mysterious substratum" located in the recesses or "caves" *(Höhlen)* of tradition, which is dialectically connected to ethical life. Hegel claims the Germanic realm's transcendence of the Greek concept of individuality emerging from this relation, and thus the transcendence of the recess.

[82] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 207.

[83] Ibid., p. 207. See also Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, pp. 5-6.

[84] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 250.

[85] Ibid., p. 207. This point is developed in Linda Williams, 'Happy Families ? Feminist Reproduction and matrilineal thought', in Isobel Armstrong (ed.), *New Feminist Discourses: Critical Essays on Theories and Texts*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992. The point is built around an alternate, and rather more suggestive translation of the Addition of §166, in which learning through representational thought *(Vorstellung)* is translated into an inhalation of ideas (p. 48). For Williams, this is not an archival issue, but one of feminine filiation. Williams indicates that where feminist thought derived from Woolf appeals to this kind of immediacy in the transmission of knowledge in the mother-daughter relationship, it falls within the Oedipal remit of mastery and passivity prescribed by Hegelian discourse. However, it is argued that Woolf's utilisation of photography in *Three Guineas* is not the immediacy of "an emotional shortcut", but "a complex mnemonic, dramatically triggering Woolf's feminist epistemological opposition to the logic of capitalism". See Maggie Humm, *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures: Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Photography and Cinema*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2002, p. 204. This difference in the interpretation of Woolf

appears as a living archive constructed from the indeterminate accumulation of more or less contingent lessons which do not accede to philosophical taxonomy, generality, or totality. Although Hegel recognises the possibility of exceptions, the necessity (law) of the feminine is, paradoxically, its contingency – a paradox defining photography: to the extent that it reduplicates external, feminine nature, it too is necessarily contingent.[85] In Hegel's gender typology, man is "powerful and active", woman is "passive and subjective".[86] But it is the very passivity of the feminine which makes it dangerous, because it lacks rigor and unity. Peacefulness is a differential trait – a passive force – which both opens itself to and disrupts the teleology of the dialectic.

Bennington argues against the claims of paternal synthesis, that the contingency of the state's frontier "will never sublate into any necessity other than that of its contingency".[87] It is possible that this resistance to synthesis at the external frontier is mirrored by the feminine as the internal frontier of paternal law within the state. In the Remark of § 162, the "total contingency" of inter-sex relations driven by purely physical union marks the contingent singularity of the meeting of each individual's "*infinitely particular* distinctness".[88] In § 163, sex returns to a state of nature, resists incorporation into the family, civil society and the state – resists spirit's proper

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suggests a deep tension in that oeuvre concerning the mediation (literary, archival, articulate) of the immediate (photographic, maternal, emotional).

[85] For Hegel, feminine contingency is 'good' to the extent that it is restricted to the domicile – hence the question for photography: is photographic contingency a domesticated, aestheticised form, or does it enable, as Benjamin thought, a revolutionary spark of futurity ? In '*Domus* and the Megalopolis', Lyotard's sense that the domestic scene is never characterised by an unfractured unity would suggest that for photography such domestication of the contingent could never be complete, but such an argument would be directed toward an arcane sense of psychological disturbance. Perhaps, rather, the contingency of the future might be located in something more quotidian, and more rare: radical misreading. See Geoffrey Bennington, 'Genuine Gasché (perhaps)' (1996), in Geoffrey Bennington, *Interrupting Derrida*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

[86] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 206.

[87] See Geoffrey Bennington, 'The Frontier: Between Kant and Hegel' (1991), *Legislations: The Politics of Deconstruction*, London: Verso, 1994, pp. 268-71.

[88] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 202.

circulation.[89] What appears in the Remark of § 162 to limit such contingency is an aesthetic rather than strictly speculative judgement on Hegel's part:

> in those modern dramas and other artistic presentations in which love between the sexes is the basic interest, we encounter a pervasive element of frostiness which is brought into the heat of the passion such works portray by the total contingency associated with it.[90]

The text turns – arbitrarily, contingently – toward the aesthetic, and toward the kind of doxa said to characterise the feminine in the Addition of § 166.[91] Hegel, in Bennington's terms, does contingent violence to contingent violence, and cannot demonstrate the necessity of the sublation of contingency without recourse to that very form.[92] The accumulation of the Hegelian text is thus proximate to the feminine mode of knowledge accumulation, which is connected to the archival ad infinitum. In the *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (1820-1829), art is the sensory, material, and particular (feminine) manifestation of spirit; which is superseded by philosophy as a relatively non-sensuous mode of generalising (masculine) thought.[93] This process also involves an antipathy to the archiving of the infinitude of particular things, and an antipathy to the written archive produced by art-theory.

Hegel describes the historical process by which the sensuous particularity of art is appropriated by the masculine figures of the dilettante, the connoisseur, and the philosopher. This process of development is implicitly the development of collections of art and of texts of art theory, the products of the grand tours which, carried out as a part

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[89] Ibid., pp. 202-3.
[90] Ibid., p. 202.
[91] Ibid., p. 207.
[92] Bennington, 'The Frontier', p. 270, p. 269.
[93] Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (1823-29), Bernard Bosanquet (trans), London: Penguin Books, 1993, p. 5, p. 10.

of masculine culture, represent the intellectualisation and masculinisation of leisure, and hence the masculinity of the ensuing archives. But, given that only the philosopher accedes properly to masculine generality, the preceding figures are feminised. Taste, domain of the dilettante, is of the sensuous, and its feeling is "the indefinite dull region of the mind".[94] Theoretically, feeling represents a block to development, and hence, "study becomes tedious from its indefiniteness and vacancy, and repulsive from its attentiveness to little subjective peculiarities."[95] Nature is an excessive example of such chaotic accumulation of endless elements.[96] The endlessness of subjective ideas of beauty, unconstrained by universal laws, has produced its own glut of texts, "which may be read *ad nauseum*".[97] In the metaphor for this condition – "the depths of the matter remained a sealed book to mere taste" – the ad infinitum is not only endless in extent, but a recess which blocks access to the development of masculine thought.[98] In Hegel's history, the taste of the dilettante is superseded by the knowledge of the connoisseur.[99] The position is stronger, but it too is infected by the ad infinitum. If knowledge of art begins with the particular objects of art, art-theory immediately encounters a limitless field made indefinite by horizons of finitude, both spatial and temporal, material and intellectual. Art-scholarship delves into the

> immeasurable region of individual works of art of ancient and modern times, works which in part have actually perished, in part belong to distant countries or portions of the world or which adverse fortune has withdrawn from one's own observation. Moreover, every work belongs to its age, to its nation, and to its environment, and depends upon particular and historical and other ideas or aims.

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[94] Hegel, *Introductory Lectures*, p. 37.
[95] Ibid., p. 38.
[96] Ibid., p. 11.
[97] Ibid., p. 8.
[98] Ibid., p. 39.
[99] Ibid.

> For this reason art-scholarship further requires a vast wealth of historical information [...]. And lastly, this kind of scholarship not only needs, like every other, a memory for information, but a vivid imagination in order to retain distinctly the images of artistic forms [...] in order to have them present to the mind for purposes of comparison with other works.[1]

This description manifestly refers to the collation of archival material – art-works, reproductions and studies – and the institutionalisation of archives. In its very attention to particularity, art-connoisseurship risks vagueness and indeterminacy, and encroaches upon the tedium and nausea of the ad infinitum. Given that the feminine has been attached to the particular, which is itself attached to the ad infinitum, the archive appears here within the conflux of the two terms: the femininity of the archival ad infinitum. In its generality, philosophy represents a retraction from this ad infinitum of things and texts. What replaces the collections of art in its particularity is the encyclopaedic taxonomy of universal knowledge represented by Hegelian philosophy. And thus, what replaces the archive of things, and its attendant texts, is the archive of thought *(Gedanke)*.

The antipathy to modern mechanicity is signalled throughout the *Introductory Lectures* in a manner that stands as a precursor to Stieglitz's antipathy to repetition, De Zayas' antipathy to memory, Weston's antipathy to the mechanical, and Adams' affirmation of the immediate. If art is mere copying, it fails to be animated by the Spirit which is manifested through the human mind. Hegel marks the difference between the freely creative faculty of fancy *(Phantasie)* and the repetitive mechanicity of imagination *(Einbildungskraft)*. The "natural gift" *(Naturgabe)* of fancy is an effect of the extrusion of rational spirit into consciousness. Imagination has a different relation to

[1] Ibid., pp. 17-8.

spirit, which is contingent upon organic memory. Imagination rather rests on the "recollection", "preservation" and "reproduction" of human states and experiences, which affirm individuality against the universal.[2] This archiving is repetitive – it is marked by the failure to progress beyond progress which characterises the ad infinitum. This indicates an antipathy to the memory of contingent and empirical circumstances of human life which is played out in the antipathy to the archives of art. The antipathy to the mnemonic copying required by the art-scholar is also registered in the secondarity of learning by rote.[3] The necessity of learning by rote and of the necessity of the sensuous particularity of the sign for philosophy is part of de Man's subversion of Hegel, in which thought cannot evade a material inscription which forgets or erases the ideality of spirit.[4] If this subversion is transcribed as the necessity of mechanicity and archival material, the *Introductory Lectures* attempt the erasure of the archival form of philosophy: the history of art is represented through the metaphor of the temple, which, since art's highest form is Romantic poetry, suppresses the library as an proper archival form.[5] De Man's argument – that the nonsensuous generality of philosophy cannot evade the prosaic materiality of the sign – indicates that this suppressed archival form is also that proper to Hegel's encyclopaedic project: the affirmation of the Word gestures towards words.[6]

Bennington's argument concerning the contingency of the frontier is that philosophy can only sublate contingency through a contingent repression. A similar

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[2] Ibid., p. 45.
[3] Ibid., p. 44.
[4] Paul de Man, 'Sign and Symbol in Hegel's *Aesthetics*' (1980), in Paul de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology*, Andrzej Warminski (ed.), Theory and History of Literature, Vol. 65, Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
[5] Hegel, *Introductory Lectures*, pp. 90-7.
[6] Ibid., p. 95.

effect structures De Man's argument that philosophy cannot sublate the materiality of inscription – a materiality which would link to mechanical memory, the accumulation of archives, and the ad infinitum. The gendered addition would argue that philosophy can only master feminine forms (contingency, particularity, ad infinitum) through contingent (feminine) acts. Such internal impurity of philosophical masculinity marks Hegel's restriction of woman to the private sphere. This consignation is reiterated at the level of the difference *(Differenz)* between the family and the state – the place of civil society (§ 182).[7] In the figure of Antigone, woman represents something of an epistemological or metaphysical limit for philosophy, but this difference is itself limited by the boundary of the domicile. What causes fear for philosophy is the possibility that the feminine may transgress its limit and enter the public sphere not as a matter of contingency (the legal exception) but as a matter of necessity (become the legal rule). In the thematics of the feminine, rather than in the contingent violence of war at the external borders of the state, the transgression of the internal border of the domicile is marked by the dangerously passive quality of the feminine. In these terms, the contingency of the feminine is positioned somewhere between the family and the state, but as a contingent force of disruption which does not fit the requirements of the synthetic philosophical between-space of civil society. The feminine would thus represent the difference of *Differenz* – an acentricity.

Something like this impure symbolic masculinity and this feminine acentricity has been implicated in Stieglitz's attempt to impose order (necessity) upon the flux (contingency) of modernity. Frampton is comparatively affirmative of the femininity of

[7] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, pp. 220-1.

endlessness, and appears to value the acentric. The ecstatic does not appear to be symmetrically opposed to temporality because it too involves duration; rather, it represents the destabilisation of the opposition between space and time. However: there is a propensity for these apparently acentric terms to reiterate within themselves a symmetrical gender opposition, which reiterates traditional gender stereotypes. Frampton tends to retain the association of the feminine and domestic labour as a backdrop to the drama of paternal conflict.

Note 2 – The Oedipal Scene of the Infinite Archive: *Vegetable Locomotion* and *Adsumus Absumus*.

Frampton's analysis in 'Eadweard Muybridge: Fragments of a Tesseract' (1973) concerns precisely the relation between trauma and infinite repetition. Between "obsession" and science, a "delirium of inexorable logic" produces the "encyclopaedic enormity" of the oeuvre.[8] The genesis of the images is seen less in the contingency of the gamble over the hooves, less in the determinacy of science, and more in jouissance: "erotic rapture, or the extremes of rage and terror" exampled in Muybridge's act of murder.[9] The murder of the wife's lover, the domestic friction of infidelity, results in a repetition of the ecstatic temporality of its moment, this repetition abreacting the traumatic influx: Muybridge ends the project, and retires to the suburbs.[10] Archival

[8] 781 plates sampled from 100,000 exposures – Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, London: Lawrence King Publishing, 2002, pp. 213-4.

[9] Frampton's mythifying and dehistoricising emphasis on the psychological trauma of the murder underplays preceding physiological trauma. Compare Arthur Shimamura, 'Muybridge in Motion: Travels in Art, Psychology and Neurology', *History of Photography*, Vol. 26, No. 4, Winter 2002. In emphasising risk-taking, randomness, and licentiousness, however, this reading is ill-equipped to negotiate the mechanical repetition of the images.

[10] Hollis Frampton, 'Eadweard Muybridge: Fragments of a Tesseract' (1973), in Frampton, *Circles*, pp. 73-7, p. 77, pp. 77-9. Characteristic of Frampton, Muybridge's assumed name is connected to "a hexagonal plinth

accumulation is thus not only a product of the motor of trauma, but the means of its dissipation. Frampton consequently contends that the missing sequence from the archive is "man holding a pistol and firing". Such a sequence would be the unseen traumatic meta-image of the archive (the set of its subsets) that cannot appear. The meta-image visualises the "blank" internal to the unconscious which the superego externalises as castration anxiety in Kristeva's *Black Sun.*[11] Thus, the eternal and quantitavely infinite repository of the psyché, in which the unconscious cannot say 'no', cannot repress or forget, would be originally inflected with the finitude of the anarchival, destructive drive of *Archive Fever.*[12] Frampton's reinscription of the blank would also mark the psyché as unfinite.

Frampton and Marion Faller's *Sixteen Studies from Vegetable Locomotion* (1975) spuriously claims to be selected from a quantity one greater than Muybridge's 781 plates in *Animal Locomotion* (1887).[13] In this sense, the meta-image is reinscribed: infinity plus one. But we receive only the 'grammatical synopsis': the accumulation of Frampton's images are driven by critical desire. The images mark the appearance of the traumatic in diminutive form: the ecstatic, just as in Muybridge's murder, is a feature of the domestic scene. Indeed, the series is heavy-handedly Oedipal: Frampton refers to a photograph of his father with a squash hanging from his trousers.[14] *Vegetable Locomotion* was similarly facilitated by surplus harvest – this destruction of the

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engraved with the names of the kings" which "half the town of England boast" (p. 71) – another figure of potentially infinite geometric tessellation.

[11] Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1987), New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, pp. 25-6.

[12] Sigmund Freud, 'Negation' (1925), in *On Metapsychology*, p. 442; Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing' (1966), in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1978, p. 204, p. 222, p. 224, p. 228; Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 79.

[13] See Jenkins and Krane, *Recollections*, pp. 76-85.

[14] Ibid., p. 76.

plenitude of nature registers an identification with paternal productivity. But the Oedipal scene is not only constructed around the familial milieu, nor only around Muybridge: Weston is the precursor for the elevation of domestic produce to the aesthetic (fig.59). Where zucchinis shatter, Weston's symbols of phallic power are subject to destruction – Frampton adopts a parricidal relation to the patriarch of the photographic archive. It would be simple to state the political correctness of this series, but the gender politics of this moment, or the class and gender stereotypes of Muybridge's images of labour are not an object of Frampton's written work.

Fig.59: Hollis Frampton & Marion Faller, *Zucchini squash encountering sawhorse [var. "Dread"]*, image no. 2 / 16 from *Sixteen Studies in Vegetable Locomotion*, monochrome photograph, 11" x 14".

Issues of gender and aesthetic labour are the subject of Wagner's description of the play of identities and photographic genres in Zogbaum's contact sheet of Pollock and Krasner (fig.60). The figure of Krasner 'the artist' cannot be disentracted from the roles it is uneasily enmeshed with, yet her faith in painting is the "fiction" that it offers a space outside of gender and social politics – that is: to avoid being read as a woman

appendixed to the masculine.[15] The determinant behind this shoot is Pollock's reputation "above all", yet this sense of priority erases Krasner's role, which is indicated in the central section of the Namuth film: as a figure of the universal viewer and as the particular person who defines the work as art.[16]

Fig.60: Wilfred Zogbaum, *Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock at Springs* (c.1950), gelatin silver contact sheet detail.

Vegetable Locomotion intersects with the contact sheet in the inversion of the private into the public, the self-conscious adoption of roles, and the primacy of the masculine figure. This, and the other collaborative work, appear in Frampton's oeuvre, rather than Faller's, and in comparison to the other collaborative work, *Rites of Passage* (1983-1984), *Vegetable Locomotion* is evidently Frampton's meta-archival terrain. Frampton purposively acts out the duality of the Oedipal scene: the homage to the empirical father (Frampton Snr.) and murder of the photographic father (Weston), via an attachment to the other photographic father (Muybridge). Faller does not appear as a "pale copy" of

[15] Anne Wagner, 'Krasner's Presence, Pollock's Absence', in Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron, *Significant Others: Creativity & Intimate Partnership*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1993, p. 234.
[16] Wagner, 'Krasner's Presence', pp. 242-3, pp. 231-2.

Frampton, as Krasner in historical accounts of Pollock; but in the gendered labour enacted by Faller, she, like Krasner, "remains limited and / or defined" by her ironised relation to such roles.[116]

Paradoxically, the attack on Weston appears to have a tendency to reiterate, if ironically, Muybridge's taxonomy of gendered roles, and gendered labour. For example: Frampton performs *Carrot Ejaculating* in a miniature drama of tumescence, while *Zucchini Squash Encountering Sawhorse* traumatically emasculates the phallic symbol; Faller performs *Dill Bundling*, and *Sweet Corn Disrobing*. This is not to say that the series rigorously divides gendered labour: Frampton may perform the clinical operation of *Summer Squash Undergoing Surgery*, while Faller disembowels a pumpkin, but this proximity is differentiated by variety: Yellow Straightneck and Cinderella. As the series is collaborative, *Winter Squash Vacillating*, passed between two persons, is the one series to image dialogue – a meta-image in its circularity. But 'vacillating' is a significant term: *Sunflower reclining* may indicate the collapse of the phallus without the support of the feminine, but just as Frampton's thought is prevalently determined by an axiomatics of oscillation, *Vegetable Locomotion* indicates a series of oscillations between stereotypical roles – Frampton cannot think outside of the ironisation of existing gender positions.

Just as *Vegetable Locomotion* utilises Muybridge as a pretext, Weston is an explicit referent for the photo-text work *Adsumus Absumus* (1982). The image of peppers accompanies a text describing culinary ecstasy and domestic unity – against Weston's domestic friction (fig.61). But the ecstatic temporality of the image is

[116] Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron, 'Introduction', in *Significant Others*, p. 10.

complicated: despite the hyperbole made by the text about the increase of "essence" and "lucence" through preservation, the shrivelled prepuce effectively marks a historical distance from the buffed glans of Weston's fodder, the decay of the 'thing in itself'. This indicates the endless oscillation between historic and ecstatic temporality.

Fig.61: Hollis Frampton, *Pepper (Capsicum longum)*, image no. X / XIV from *ADSUMUS / ABSUMUS* (1982), Ektacolor photograph, 20" x 16".

The series offers a collection of modes of the ecstatic; but these do not, pace Jenkins, constitute a linear progression of increasing phylum and visual complexity.[117] The work operates through a tension between non-linear, dehierarchised forms of the ecstatic and linear (meta)narrative – a tension between the domestic and the cosmic. This condition finds its theorisation in Frampton's thoughts on Talbot in 'Incisions in History / Segments of Eternity' (1974). The former is composed of discrete, isometric moments connected by cause and effect.[118] The latter is the delirium of a still

[117] Jenkins, 'The "Other Work"', p. 30.
[118] Frampton 'Incisions', pp. 94-5.

photographic tableau vivant in which time stops, slows, disrupts, or acquires poetic density. After Breedlove's 600 miles per hour, 8.7 second accident, the massive volume of its account indicates "a temporal expansion in the ratio of some 655 to one. Proust, Joyce, Beckett, seem occasionally to achieve such explicatory plenitude".[119] The mutual opposition between the two forms of cut is "endless", as their cognates: "image and word, eros and thanatos, eternity and time".[120] Frampton effectively opposes two forms of accumulation here: discrete elements which constitute the classical ad infinitum; and non-elemental cuts which would comprise the unfinite.

§ 4 – The Cut of the Navel.

Note 1 – The Femininity of Erotic Delirium.

Frampton's later work reiterates the division of the historic and ecstatic; and since film uses still photography as a tool, this relation for photography can be read via the differentiation of film and video in 'The Withering Away of the State of Art' (1974):

> Photons impress upon the random delirium of silver halide crystals in the film emulsion an illusion of order; electrons warp the ordered video raster, determinate as a crystal lattice, into an illusion of delirium.[121]

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[119] Ibid., p. 98. This rather mechanistic sense of calculable poetic density, and the recourse to the literary will become key in the gendered image of the response to Weston. Note also the rather anachronistic attachment to Michaels and Krims (p. 104) – inadvertently then, Frampton is effectively nostalgic for a time in which these people were radical, when f/64 style modernism was still a cultural force. See Christopher Phillips, 'Word Pictures: Frampton and Photography', in *October* 32, Spring 1985, p. 69.

[120] Frampton 'Incisions', p. 106.

[121] Hollis Frampton, 'The Withering Away of the State of Art' (1974), in Frampton, *Circles*, p. 163. The rectangular film frame is nostalgic for "boundless horizon" – ad infinitum; whereas the video frame is "a degenerate ameoboid [sic] shape passing for a rectangle" – indeterminate endlessness. This difference is also played out in terms of self-reflexivity. Film "reiterates to unmodified infinity its radiant rectangle", a frame which divides the seen and unseen, the conscious and unconscious. Video reproduces "variations upon its own most typical content" (pp. 164-5).

In the language of reproduction, film is equated to "lost wax casting", video to "making a baby".[122] Film is tied to the object; video appears relatively autogenic, but this difference dissipates in the erotic:

> in the mandala of feedback, graphically diagrammed illusion of alternating thrust and withdrawal [...] video confirms, finally, a generic eroticism. That eroticism belongs to the photographic cinema as well, through the virtually tactile and kinesthetic illusion of surface and space afforded by an image whose structure seems as fine as that of "nature" [...].[123]

If the precrystalline solution of *A Visitation of Insomnia* is connected to the feminine, it would also be connected to the delirium of grain. Infinite detail here maintains a phenomenal valence which is attached to the erotic: the order imposed upon grain inverts into delirium which is opposed to the feminine passivity of the photographic substrate in Weston, for example. Thus, the ordered image would be masculine (as in Weston's containment of infinite detail). If video is opposite, its imposition of delirium on the raster would need to be termed feminisation. Or perhaps: the crystalline grid appears in the structural position of the feminine – an association of femininity and mechanicity, if not logic. Order and disorder, crystal and solution, masculine and feminine: these converge in the erotic. Thus, ensuing description of the spiral of self-reflexion may refer to both forms, and hence to still photographics.

> If the spiral implies a copulative interaction between the image and the seeing mind, it may also become, when love is gone (through that systematic withdrawal of nourishment for the affections that is 'television'), a navel – the mortal scar of eroticism past – and thus an *omphalos*, a center, a sucking and spitting vortex into which the whole household is drawn, and within which it is consumed.[124]

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[122] Frampton, 'Withering', p. 167.
[123] Ibid., p. 165.
[124] Frampton, 'Withering', pp. 165-6.

The omphalos is between the delirium of grain and the photographic image, and thus between infinite detail and formal containment, the infinite grid and its transmogrification – between masculine and feminine positions. And it would be difficult, along with the explicit reference in this lecture to *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930), not to read this passage as an implicit reference to *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900).[125]

In Kristeva's terms, Frampton adopts a position of melancholic attachment to the lost mother in an explicit manner which exceeds the manic exaltation of Adams – and in this sense marks a significant shift in the gender politics of photographic practice: a positive revalorisation of the feminine sublime. Yet Frampton's nostalgia, as the hapless hunt for totality indicates, is also for the imaginary father. In this paternal identification, Frampton is close to Freud.

Note 2 – Freud and the Navel: the Chiasmus of Feminine Endlessness and Masculine Determination.

Freud's self-analysis of the dream of Irma's injection in *The Interpretation of Dreams* is discussed by Shoshona Felman as the founding moment of psychoanalysis; seminally conceptualising the function of dreaming and posing an unanswerable question: 'what does a woman want ?'[126] As Bill Readings notes, the question marks the desire of this "anxious patriarchy" to dissolve feminine alterity – determining the demand would conform the feminine to end-oriented desire, producing a masculine

[125] The psychologism of 'Muybridge' and 'Withering' have their unity in Sol le Witt's *Muybridge I* (1964) – since this piece combines the serial image with the navel. For reproduction of which see Meyer, *Minimalism*, p. 205.

[126] Further research should compare Granoff's claim that the 'Dandelion fantasy' dream is the "birth certificate" of psychoanalysis – Schor, *Reading in Detail*, p. 76.

femininity, and terminate the demand by acceding to it.[127] But for de Man, the navel transgresses its dichotomy: "what should we do with the manifest bisexuality of that mark which separates as much as it unites, and which escapes the difference between the genders ?"[128] In an extension of this reading, I will affirm this moment's continuity with the sense that the ur-scene of discourse is constituted around an encounter with gendered infinites.

Referring to the dream's condensation of psycho-social figures, Freud states a problematic of the groundless inexhaustibility of comparative, relational meaning emerging from the inexhaustible differences of feminine figures.[129]

> There is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be left obscure; this is because we become aware during the work of interpretation that at that point there is a tangle of dream-thoughts which cannot be unravelled and which moreover adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream. This is the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown. The dream-thoughts to which we are led by interpretation cannot, from the nature of things, have any definite endings; they are bound to branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought. It is at some point where this mesh-work is particularly close that the dream-wish grows up, like a mushroom out of its mycelium.[130]

Probing Irma's throat, Freud gags on infinity; reiterating the classical metaphysical construction of the ad infinitum (mesh-work) as that which recesses determinate

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[127] Bill Readings, 'Pagans, Perverts or Primitives? Experimental Justice in the Empire of Capital', in Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *Judging Lyotard*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 191, n. 42.
[128] Cited in Shoshona Felman, 'Postal Survival, or The Question of the Navel', in Peter Brooks et al., *The Lesson of Paul de Man, Yale French Studies* No. 69, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985, p. 70.
[129] The concatenation of father-figures in *Vegetable Locomotion* (Frampton Snr, Muybridge, Weston) and *Adsumus Absumus* (Frampton Snr, Talbot, Weston) effectively make for a gendered inverse of the navel, and of Höch's seminal collage.
[130] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) trans. James Strachey, Penguin Freud Library, London: Penguin Books, 1991, p. 186, n. 2, pp. 671-672.

synthesis (psychoanalysis).[131] Such recalls a description of the ad infinitum in the *Science of Logic*, where Hegel remarks that:

> [i]n the attempt to contemplate such an infinite, our thought [...] must sink exhausted. It is true indeed that we must abandon the unending contemplation, not however because the occupation is too sublime, but because it is too tedious [...] because the same thing is constantly recurring.[132]

The ad infinitum carries the threat of the deflation of philosophy – an epistemological trauma. In this sense, Freud is attached to the image of the photographic in Frampton: the indeterminacy of the feminine mesh-work equates to the delirium of unordered grain. Unlike Frampton's valorisation of such delirium, Freud retracts, dismissing its endlessness as 'nothing': the ad infinitum appears via a retraction – a repression.[133]

Schor cites two laws of the Freudian detail: everything must be said by the patient; of which "every detail must be interpreted" – although the latter is contradicted by the obviation of details in the moment of the navel. Schor's revision is thus "the laws of detail obtain in a utopia where interpretation encounters no resistance [...] a utopia of transparency and exhaustiveness" – an idealisation of the detail.[134] In Felman's reading, in comparison, the traumatic opacity of the navel is precisely what psychoanalysis perpetually circles.[135] Schor argues that the obviated details are synecdochally connected to Freud's sexuality – apparently meaningless details are the

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[131] Grammatically gendered: *Maschenwerk* (meshwork) – as feminine; *Pilz* (mushroom) as masculine.
[132] Cited in Jeff Wall, 'Into the Forest: Two Sketches for Studies of Rodney Graham's Work', *Rodney Graham: Works from 1976 – 1994*, Catalogue, 1994, p. 12.
[133] Precisely, as Schor remarks, of Freud's own femininity. See Schor, *Reading in Detail*, p. 70. On the negation of judgement as an intellectualisation of repression in the oral drives, see Freud, *Metapsychology*, pp. 438-9. Here, the 'no' says 'yes' in its recognition of the repressed, a repetition of the 'yes' of the unconscious, which knows no 'no'. The gendering of this repression is thus complex: it should be noted that for Derrida the double affirmation is connected to the feminine – as an affirmation of the future. See Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, pp. 188-207.
[134] Schor, *Reading in Detail*, pp. 68-9, p. 70, p. 77.
[135] Felman, 'Postal Survival', pp. 71-2.

mark of censorship. Schor ends by feminising Freud through the connotations of blood; but in epistemological terms, the femininity of psychoanalysis would be in its own endlessness. To the extent that psychoanalysis continually circles this feminine alterity, archival production partly occurs from the courting of and resistance to the discursive trauma of the ad infinitum. To amend terms in concordance with de Man, the 'resistance to theory' (the resistance to the resistance to determinacy) results in archival production.

Freud crosses out investigation of the mesh-work with the X of censorship.[136] In a similar way, the primary mechanism (condensation and displacement) reiterates a logicised organisation of the spatial and temporal which censors their more archaic non-division – something like différance. Always already differing and deferring from itself, différance is a chiasmus partially crossed out by its own X.[137] Lyotard's discussion of the dream processes in 'The Dream-Work Does Not Think' (1983) attests to the problematic issue of coding condensation and displacement as metaphoric and

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[136] Irigaray's negotiation of the infinity of desire remains complex in 'The Bodily Encounter with the Mother' (1981), in David Lodge and Nigel Wood, *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, London: Longman, 2000, pp. 418-20, pp. 321-2. Irigaray implicitly states that infinity (of desire) is a product of repression (of the maternal): "[t]here is no reason why either the hunger of a child or the sexual appetite of a woman should be insatiable. Everything proves the contrary. But this buccal opening of the child and all desire become an abyss if the sojourn *in utero* is censored". Nevertheless, if the scar of the navel is "unavoidable" and already replaced by the Symbolic Order, its reinstatement operates at a level of metaphorical substitution and myth-making which indicates the necessity of negotiating an ad infinitum and an absolute other – for example: in the erection whose detumescence signals mourning for the "ever-open wound" of lost plenitude. In *Speculum*, the distance from metaphysical concepts of infinity is clearer: through biological reproduction, the mother adopts a "like" but not "same" position of the Mother – "*with no closure of the circle or the spiral of identity.* Endlessly encircling the speculum of a primal place", inscribed "in an in-finite genealogical process". See Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 76. Irigaray's late position on the infinites opposes the relation between ad infinitum and closure to that of feminine becoming, in which "dilation" of phenomenal temporality (like Frampton's ecstatic moment) appears to oppose the "punctal quality of the instant" upon which the metaphysical infinites could be built. See Luce Irigaray, *Elemental Passions* (1982), trans. Joanne Collie and Judith Still, London: Athlone Press, 1992, pp. 71-2.

[137] Geoffrey Bennington, *Interrupting Derrida*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 89. See also Jacques Derrida, 'The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology' (1968), in Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (1972), trans. Alan Bass, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

metonymic categories.[138] Psychoanalysis cannot evade the effects of spatio-temporal displacement, and is thus prone to its indeterminacies: condensation will always differ into displacement, and the infinite will always defer to the finite – in an endless and mutually exclusive motion. In this chiasmic mode, the navel also posits a connection between (masculine) determinate knowledge and (feminine) alterity – it appears as a figure of both severance and of contact, a cut which joins.[139] Likewise, the dream disrupts gendered figures and bodily parts.[140] Like Frampton's serial accumulations of non-elemental photographs, and like Höch's riven images, the navel is a memorial to this problematic. For Frampton, the motor of endless material archives is the work of mourning for the loss of a differential arché which is experienced in the delirium of unfinite grain, and the loss of the paternal mastery of this delirium.

Impression 6 – Visual Research: Untitled (Navel).

This photograph is approximately nine foot high; suspended from the wall by bulldog clips, its lower edge touching the floor, curling up slightly. The wires spewing from the aperture were designed to approximate to a number of forms (hair, water, electronic communication) in an attempt to condense into one image the historically gendered sublime and its psychoanalytic and technological avatars (fig.62).[141]

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[138] Jean- François Lyotard, 'The Dream-Work Does Not Think' (1983), in Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *The Lyotard Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

[139] For de Man, philosophy and psychoanalysis are differentiated by the posture adopted toward the cut of the navel: philosophy is birthed by its Gordian severance, psychoanalysis traumatically circulating around navel. See Felman, 'Postal Survival', p. 68.

[140] Ibid., p. 62.

[141] Fig.62: Sas Mays, *Untitled (Navel)*, lambda print, 300 x 150 cm – overleaf, vertical alignment.

To condense, but also to displace itself – for this research, it is somewhat paradigmatic for photography in a rather literalistic visual sense: every image has a multiplicity of lines of connecting details which ultimately exceed determination and disappear. In this context, Freud posits the feminine as the exhaustion of determinate psychoanalytic knowledge, repressing the feminine as Other, pushing femininity into the thither side of the representable, like the back of a photograph. But this image suggests that indeterminacy inhabits the hither side of the representable, the front of the photograph – the thicker wires do not come to definite points, but terminate by fraying into twisted bundles of smaller wires, which themselves fray, implying an endless subdivision. The image was constructed as a way of visually thinking about the moment of the navel – not only to imagine and transform Freud's impression, but to visualise the concatenation of psychoanalysis with a historically gendered aesthetic form: the feminine sublime.

Note 3 – The Archival Necropolis: the Exit from Weston and its Reiteration of Gendered Opposition.

In Frampton's 'Impromptus on Edward Weston: Everything in its Place' (1978), the chiasmic relation between image and text is proximate to the relation between condensation and displacement in Freud: the photographic is linked to a gestalt impression of objects which exist in truncated space; but textual reading occurs via the temporal movement of a "microscopic point" of inspection. Weston's close-up makes this detail fill the frame, the object becoming a noun which allows the eye both the instantaneity of gestalt and prolonged attention. As this collapse of image and text indicates, and since the industrial ten by eight format is equated to the quarto page, "the

photograph forever recollects, collides with, shares the space of [...] the printed word".[1] The attempt to maintain the "purity of the noun" is viewed as an exercise in controlling the contingency of objects, to create a universe of manageable forms.[2] In this context, let us remember a referent in *Adsumus Absumus* (fig.63).

Fig.63: Hollis Frampton, *Oyster Shell (Pleurotus ostreatus)*, image no. VII / XIV from *ADSUMUS / ABSUMUS* (1982), Ektacolor photograph, 20" x 16".

The precursor is Weston, both in the imaging of foodstuffs and in the specific terms of, for example *Toadstool* (1931) (fig.64).

Fig.64: Edward Weston, *Toadstool* (1931), gelatin silver print, 10" x 8".

[1] Frampton 'Impromptus', p. 155.
[2] Ibid., p. 158.

But against Weston's suspicious hatred of psychoanalysis, Frampton remarks: "the establishment of its mycelium is always a sign of pathology in the host".[3]

Speculatively then, the detailed view can be, in some moments of horror, a traumatic response to the unnameable: as the headlights bear down, a discarded shoe in the road blooms huge in the key-hole vision of shock. Weston's close-ups have another dimension in this light: their singular attention to objects which fill the frame, stilling the contingency of the world, represent a traumatic response to there being too many things, too many details – a fear of the millionfold. This kind of phobia would also be registered in the use of formal simplicity to master and contain the details of the photographic image.

Despite the Group f/64 rhetoric of precision, or indeed because of the repressed obverse of the overbearing attention to formal simplification, Weston's practice represents a traumatic response to infinite detail. The apparent historical shift in which infinite detail is subject to loss of wonder would be a repression which cannot but indicate the continued power of that affect. In extension, photographic grain does not appear simply as a passive feminine substrate upon which masculine order may be imposed: the very image of passivity marks a fear that the male psyché may be swamped by the confusion of details – as Weston's antipathy to the endless permutations of family portraiture attest.

The continuity between Weston and Freud would be that for Weston form (of the mushroom) contains the feminine endlessness of infinite detail; in Freud (the mushroom of) the dream-wish stands as a determinate form against the feminine endlessness of the

[3] Jenkins and Krane, *Recollections*, p. 96.

mycelium. In both discourses, the endlessness of the feminine is courted and retracted from in order to produce determinate knowledge. In both discourses, there is a transformation of the terms of the sublime which nevertheless maintain the gendered opposition of the infinites.

In a reverse of Freud's desire for a memorial at the origin of psychoanalysis, Weston's accumulation leads to a memorial at the terminus, the sign of an archival accumulation whose aim is to contain the infinity of things in the world.

> There is, in the spectacle of Weston's accumulation of some sixty thousand 8 x 10 negatives, something oddly funerary. It is as if one had entered the tomb of a Pharaoh. The regal corpse, immured in dignity and gilt, is surrounded on every side by icons of all that he will need to take him into eternity: there must be food to eat, girls to fuck, friends to talk to, toys to play with [...].[4]

The idiosyncrasy and secrecy of Weston's meaning, the "refusal to emancipate his images from the patriarchal house of his own perceptions", withholds full comprehension; thus

> many of us cannot own him as an ancestor of ours. His splendors as a carnal parent are beyond contention; but as an intellectual parent, he amounted, finally, to one of those frowning, humorless fathers who teaches his progeny the trade and then prevents them from practicing it [...].[5]

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[4] Frampton 'Impromptus', p. 158. In a letter to Fliess in 1900, after a return to Bellevue, the house in which the dream occurred, Freud expresses his desire for a marble tablet – an inscription commemorating the discovery: "In this house, on July 24th, 1895 / the Secret of Dreams was Revealed / to Dr Sigm. Freud". (Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 199.) This signals a desire for commemoration at the domestic site – it represents an identification with paternal authority: the tablet also indicates, as well as the tablets of Mosaic law and the laws of the archons, the paternal authority of the domus. In Forrester's reading, psychoanalysis is born via a repeated evasion of responsibility and acceptance of authority. See John Forrester, *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan, Derrida*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 30-47. In the inscription, then, 'revealed' acts as an opaque mark which divests Freud of agency. The plaque is effectively the mushroom of a wish, although tied to the egotism of the day-dream.

[5] Frampton 'Impromptus', p. 147, p. 159.

> But since some kind of a choice must be made, I would state a personal preference for a chimera ... a hybrid of Venus Geneatrix, who broods over the mountains and the waters, indifferently donating pleasure and pain to everything that lives, and Tim Finnegan, who enjoyed everything, and most of all his own confusion, and ended with the good humour to preside happily over his own departure ... whose picture in the family album is no photograph at all, but an unfinished painting on glass, at once apparent within and transparent to this very space in which we live and work and must try to understand.[6]

Frampton's response to the patriarch is to evade the photographic through the image of painting on glass. But the chimera reiterates the fundamental photographic paradox in gendered terms – it too is enmeshed within the photographic. Joyce may elsewhere be associated with femininity.[7] But here Finnegan represents, against Weston, a good father. Venus reiterates the historical association of femininity and contingency, and is attached to the phenomenal experience of objectivity. Venus is attached to infinite detail as that which gives the illusion of the continuum with nature.

In its complexity and contingency, photography intersects with an image of nature which is historically coded feminine:

> [t]he camera deals [...] with every particle of information present within the field of view; it is wholly indiscriminate [...]. The ultimate structure of the photographic image seems to elude us at the same rate as the ultimate structure of any other natural object [....] the photograph seems a virtually perfect continuum [....] seemingly coterminous with the whole sensible world.[8]

The feminine is attached to the sensuous; whereas intellect is attached to Joyce – who marks subjective fictivity; narrativity, invention, and signifiers. The chimera reiterates

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[6] Ibid., p. 159. The chimera here echoes with image IV of *Adsumus Absumus*: the object is a fake, a construction, like the painting on glass, which appears between media – "an artificial fetish, made by incising the fish along its dorsal edge. It is then opened like a pamphlet [...]". See Jenkins and Krane, *Recollections*, p. 94.

[7] See Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, p. 145.

[8] See Frampton 'Metahistory', p. 111.

the liminal moment of *Nostalgia* divested of trauma. It does not figure synthesis, but unending oscillation.

I might hazard here a connection to Irigaray's analysis of a female propensity toward pre-Oedipal regression (to a state of psycho-sexual development prior to the substitution of the penis for the baby). Such regressions mean that some women effect "repeated alternation" between masculine and feminine positions – an "enigmatic bisexuality" which inverts the telos of male sexuality and "absolute" knowledge.[9] But on the other hand, the chimera repeats paternal gender values: this oscillation is spun around the gravitational centre of an epistemological heterocentrism which is somewhat blind the possibilities of difference from its oppositional difference. Where the liminal moment of *Nostalgia* finitises infinite detail and opens onto endless indeterminacy, in a proximity to the unfinite, and where the ecstatic moment is not symmetrically opposed to time because involving duration, Frampton appears to destabilise logical opposition. But the chimera appears to reiterate a symmetrical gender opposition which is anachronistic in its attachment to a sublimation of heterosexual reproduction.

Concluding Note – Lyotard, Frampton, and Archival Deity.

A contingent proximity between Lyotard and Frampton is lodged in the precedents of a general cultural thought, and the particular attention to Borges. In *Libidinal Economy* (1973), Lyotard describes an opposition between forms of jouissance and the semiotic. Firstly, the Moebius strip of the Great Libidinal Band – an infinite film which figures the indeterminate pulsions of desire. Secondly, a Cube which

[9] Irigaray, *Speculum*, p. 111.

figures the determining theatrical representation of these flows. Thirdly, the two states are linked by the figure of the Bar, which cools the Band, folding it into a volume, converting the plenitude of jouissance into signs operating through lack. Here, the meaning of the sign emerges from opposition – from a calculable series of other signs to which it refers (polysemia). The Bar is a "cut" – a figure for the point at which the indeterminacy of the presemiotic is regulated toward the "axiomatized", the symbolic, the phallic, the masculine – the "hard-on" *(bander)* of the theoretician.[10]

Lyotard's stance is indicated where "passivity", and "a philosophy of sodomists and women" is attached to the "anonymity" of the Tensor (the sign conceptualised as neither unitary, nor semiotic, but in fidelity to the pulsions).[11] In the theorist's position, Frampton states, in discussing *Zorn's Lemma*, that: "[i]n this maze of misdirection there is [...] a real ecstasy in finding your way through the traps that lie on either side."[12] In 'Mind over Matter', the reconstruction or "rehydration" of the "shrivelled specimens" of geometrical figures through narrative involves "delight".[13] This operation would also be pertinent to *Adsumus Absumus* – the phallic peppers re-engorged by the intellectual play of the narrative of domestic bliss, an erotic meeting of the theoretical and the somatic.[14]

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[10] Jean- François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* (1974), trans. Ian Hamilton Grant, London: Athlone Press 1983, pp. 242-3.
[11] Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, p. 258.
[12] Gidal, 'Interview', p. 111.
[13] Hollis Frampton, 'Mind over Matter', *October* 6, Fall 1978, p. 83.
[14] In terms of Frampton's visual practice, there is also a way in which it is circumscribed by Lyotard. Lyotard asserts that "the intensities that can be procured from a tableau vivant, [...] certain *underground* films, and perhaps *all* narration and figuration, flash like electric arcs stretched between this pole of the victim's immobilization [...] and a pole of agitation which plunges the body [...] into the most extreme disorder", that is, into "the Brownian motion of the partial pulsions". This, with the exchange of a few terms, appears to account for *Nostalgia*: pinned by the image, plunged into the delirium of grain. See Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, p. 243, p. 244.

The symbolisation of the presemiotic may also be thought of as movements from the infinitely indeterminate to the metaphysics of the absolute infinite. Discussing Borges, Lyotard remarks on the presupposition of meta-consciousness. Rather than "indiscriminate butchery", a knife-fight is played out as a "meticulous chess game".

> It would only be with regard to a central instance, that of a great Armourer keeping archives of all the murders committed by his weapons [...] that another anonymity would creep into the pulsional band, and that in place of proper names and insane mazes which they signal one could put register numbers [...] slipping, from tensorial anonymity to productive bureaucratic anonymity.[15]

These three metaphors (Cube, Band, and Armourer) are equatable to the determinants of Frampton's thought: polyhedra, infinite film, and its consequent deity – Frampton remarks that the infinite film posits,

> in the undiscoverable centre of this whole matrix of film-thoughts – an unlocateable viewing room in which, throughout eternity, sits the Great Presence screening the infinite footage.[16]

This infinite intelligence represents the commensuration of the empirical infinitude which dogs the historian, imaging the ideal of the meta-historian's generality. In contrast, Schor provides an alternate image of Borges: in 'Funes, The Memorious', the inability to forget details in their particularity displaces abstract, general, Platonic thought.[17]

Frampton's unrelenting attention to the photographic paradox (illusion and materiality), indicates an oscillation between mutually exclusive poles which include paternal generality and feminine particularity – if there is a fundamental axiom which

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[15] Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, p. 39.
[16] Gidal, 'Interview' p. 98.
[17] Schor, *Reading in Detail*, p. 6.

defines Frampton it is this: sustained contradiction. On the one hand, it is marked by axiomatic, theoretical repetition, and thus its particular form of jouissance.[18] On the other then, given the transformation of the figure of the crystal (it is not quite a figure of repetition of the same), Frampton is not entirely interior to what Lyotard defines as the theoretical. Frampton's rhetorical trick of a terminal recourse to Borges indicates the opening of a labyrinth, rather than Lyotard's characterisation of theoretical discourse as a "set of axioms, which strives to come to rest".[19] If the cut of the Bar is something Frampton cannot stop playing with, it is not simply toward theoretical rigidity, but partly to be the archivist of the jouissance embedded in its tableau. In difference to the totalising remits of *Magellan*, Lyotard retracts from being "the producer, the archivist, the knower" of pulsions: "[n]o-one has the power to draw up the map of the great film".[20] *Libidinal Economy* states a generality that holds a key to Frampton: Lyotard's thought is "no longer the drama of totalisation; rather the strangeness of fictive spaces".[21] Frampton's milieu is the drama of the desire of and impossibility of totalisation – within fictive psychic spaces. The difference between Frampton and Lyotard would then be one of affirmation: Lyotard's discourse cannot fully escape the cubic, despite the affirmation of the pulsional; Frampton is enamoured of the cubic, despite the affirmation of the ecstatic.[22]

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[18] The theoretical, gaining its pleasure from precise repetitions of the same concept, is characterised by something like voyeurism or sadism. See James Williams, *Lyotard: Towards a Postmodern Philosophy*, London: Polity Press, 1998, p. 39.
[19] Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, p. 248.
[20] Ibid., p. 42, p. 40, p. 36.
[21] Ibid., p. 42.
[22] In the metaphysics of desire proposed by Lyotard, the libidinal band is itself staged, part of the theatrics of representation. See Bill Readings, *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics*, London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 98-9.

Frampton's overall impact on tradition is dichotomous. On the one hand, photography is epistemologised in a way that had not previously been countenanced. This is the meta-archival dimension – in which there is a nostalgia for the lost totality of the Father. On the other hand, he extends the eroticism of photography, and departs from Weston's patriarchalism by engaging with femininity.[23] On this side there is a nostalgia for the Mother as origin. Nostalgia is a pertinent term for Frampton, but it is connected to mourning and melancholia, just as the relation to the symbolic is a mode of mourning. This kind of positive revalorisation of the abject would also be seen in Frampton's essay on the "Maternal Hopi" Indians.[24] Where the essay on Weston is concerned, Frampton takes the bi-sexuality of the Westonian print (feminine detail contained by masculine form) and dehierarchises the binary. Rather than degendering media, then, Frampton appears to have partially destigmatised gender. In the wake of the thought around the gender of the video raster, Frampton does allow a thinking of photography as being assembled through elements whose gendering is mobile. However, the over-riding propensity in Frampton for thinking in terms of binarity does not quite accede to the kind of multiple gender roles indicated by Kristeva or Derrida: Frampton appears at the turning-point between structuralism and poststructuralism.

[23] See for example, Hollis Frampton, 'Erotic Predicaments for Camera' (1982), in Frampton, *Circles*.
[24] Hollis Frampton, 'A Stipulation of Terms From Maternal Hopi' (1973), in Frampton, *Circles*.

CONCLUSION – Opening Statements II.

Note 1 – Summarisation: on Historical Continuities and Transformations.

From its divisive origins in European philosophical discourse, and its development in nineteenth-century photographic practices, the discourse of infinite detail is subject to a loss of wonder for its mimetic realism, the recognition of the finitude of its regress. In this process, the photograph and its archives shift from the consigning of spirit or object toward the psychical materialism of the detail – in Frampton's recognition that the accumulation of archives owes its motor to desire – and a shift from the production to the consumption of archives. Within this movement, there is a revalorisation of gendered figures: if Daguerre and Talbot represent a thwarted illumination of the feminine recess, and if Stieglitz represents the claim of penetration, Adams' maniacal affirmation of the paternal indicates a suppressed mourning for the maternal. And, for all its megalomania, Frampton's practice signals, within its positive valorisation of the maternal, a mourning for the impossible totality of masculinity, and the internal impurity of the masculine.

Despite these changes in the epistemological status of photographic granularity and its relationship to archival accumulation, there is an ongoing association made between endlessness and the feminine, which is consistently played out in the figure of the recess. What constitutes this tradition, as a tradition, is not only a parricidal lineage of formal or aesthetic development but also the consistent absorption of the association of femininity, infinite detail and the archival ad infinitum – through a rhetoric of engendering. In this sense, the lineage is governed by a dual logic – parricide and absorption – which effectively combines the theories of lineage provided by Derrida and Le Doeuff.

Note 1 – Objects of Future Research.

If Frampton represents a turning point between structuralism and post-structuralism, the conflictual relationship between proliferation and infinite detail is an object of postmodern photographic rhetoric, and which structures Krauss's thought of photography as simulation. Against photographic practices supposedly degraded by their potentially infinite repetition of the same image, Irving Penn's *Still Life with Shoe* (1980) strategically employs "infinite fineness of detail" as a mark of "rarity" and uniqueness.[1] Certainly, this kind of commodification is not the necessary telos for this discourse, considering the fractured monuments of Gursky's digital montages – their hyper-detailed image of the delirium of capital. But before linking into later and contemporary theories of the relation between detail and archive, I would like to indicate some historically antecedent points of opening for further research.

As the first chapter indicated, there may well be a disparity between aesthetic concerns and those of the mass market. The cart de visite traded detail for proliferation; yet within an economic situation where the supply of such images infrequently outstripped demand, mass culture remained immune to the phobia of infinite proliferation.[2] The relation to the infinites is thus an issue of socio-economic position. Such would be, strictly, an issue of gender: from the side of paternal thought, not only infinite detail and proliferation but the feminised position of suppressed classes. Another aspect of this issue, which has been displaced from detailed analysis in this

[1] Rosalind Krauss, 'A Note on Photography and the Simulacral' (1981), in Carol Squiers (ed.), *Over Exposed: Essays on Contemporary Photography*, New York: The New Press, 1999, p. 176, pp. 178-80.
[2] For a positive description of the "ad infinitum" of photographic multiplication, which is democratically open in terms of production, circulation and possession; and in which the contingent relations between exhibited photographs sets a precedent for contingent meetings within the social mass, see Unauthored, 'Cartes-de-Visite', *Art Journal*, October 1861, p. 306.

thesis, is that for philosophy from Plato onwards, the endlessness, the multiple, and the many is always a question of the social mass.

There is also the question of female practitioners contemporary with those analysed. This question specifically hinges on the infinites: there will always be an endless number of practices that could be reinscribed, but such research could be determined by another conception: to dislodge the essentialising connection between femininity and contingency which structures, for example, Davidoff's comparison of Adams and Imogen Cunningham.[3] As Schor affirmed, there is "no reliable body of evidence to show that women's art is either more or less particularistic than men's".[4] Such is, I think, a contemporary position – in Le Doeuff, there is a recognition of the positive value of professionalism which refuses to reiterate the paternal equation of masculinity and femininity with reason and unreason. This position is one enabled by the recognition of the inherent femininity of the symbolic.

As indicated by the practical aspect of research, Conceptual art sustains an ongoing analysis. A subsequent position from Frampton's psychoanalysation of infinite proliferation is indicated by Douglas Huebler (1924-1997); in the remits of the ongoing *Variable Piece No. 70 (in process) Global* (1971-97): to document "everyone alive".[5] At a superficial level, at least, Huebler is much less attached to achieving archival closure than Frampton – the empirical finitude of death clearly severs any claims to totalisation. Much less a meditation on medium, Huebler appears to have exchanged

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[3] Judith Freyer Davidov, *Women's Camera Work: Self / Body / Other in American Visual Culture*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1998, pp. 381-2.
[4] Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, New York and London: Methuen, 1987, p. 97.
[5] Lucy Lippard, Jack Burnham, et al., *Douglas Huebler*, catalogue, Eindhoven: Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, 1979, unpaginated.

infinite detail and finite archives with transcendent or epistemological potential for infinite particularity and impossible archives. But there is still a question as to the specific gendering of terms within Huebler's practice. For example, *Duration Piece # 31, Boston* associates birth and the feminine:

> as time 'moves' from east to west, the photograph represents the young woman during an instant when approximately half of her body existed within the old year, 1973, while the other half had entered the new year, 1974: indeed, consistent with the spirit of the season she wears the costume of the New Year's Baby.[6]

There are a number of intersections with the terms provided for the analysis of Frampton: the gender of particularity; the appropriation of the snapshot and vernacular photography as an appropriation of a feminised form of photographics in comparison to high modernism. But this piece is somewhat haunted by mythic gender tropes, like the paternal sun as the progenitor of time, although the feminine is here positively identified with temporal difference. And there is still a sense in which Huebler's trademark humour acts as something of a ruse for the exposure of the female body.[7]

Note 2 – Infinities in the Milieu of the Digital Archive.

The idea of archival incommensurability and radical particularity, which is verged on by Frampton's aporia and extended by Huebler's finitude, concerns the issue of the digital archival ad infinitum; which registers in the contemporary sociology of knowledge in precisely classical terms. For example, Mike Featherstone identifies archive fever erroneously as the drive toward the proliferation of the particular,

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[6] Huebler, *Duration Piece # 31, Boston*, in Lippard, *Douglas Huebler*.
[7] See also the "erotically evocative nature" of *Variable Piece # 116, Boston*; in Lippard, et al., *Douglas Huebler*.

betraying a nostalgia for a lost historical totality where he asserts that information "is now beyond our subjective capacity to assimilate and order, given the finite limits of the human life".[8] But Featherstone also indicates a positive valorisation of the particular as a mode of the quotidian. Whether this represents a depletion of (paternal) determination or the masculinisation of the particular can not be answered at a level of generality.

The conception of the electronic archive as ad infinitum is never far from reconstituting a relation to totality and presence. Batchen compares the structure of the web to that of the psyche in Freud's 'A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad' (1925), in discussing Vera Frenkel's web art project *Body Missing*.[9] As Derrida writes, the Wunderblock "joins [...] infinite depth in the implication of meaning [...] and, simultaneously, the pellicular essence of being, the absolute presence of any foundation."[10] For Batchen, the web "approaches this state of being" – of the "infinite depth" of the mnemic system.[11] Batchen's relation to Derrida's appropriation of 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' in *Archive Fever* is unclear here. Since each mnemonic trace are not elemental identities but doublefold marks of impression and erasure, it is not infinite, but unfinite.

The quantity of digitised information is often over ascribed.[12] But along with the abolition of the Thirty Year Rule for the opening of records to public access, the Freedom of Information Act (2000) that comes into effect in 2005 requires that all

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[8] Mike Featherstone, 'Archiving Cultures', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Jan / March 2000.
[9] http://www.yorku.ca/BodyMissing (accessed 10.10.03).
[10] Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing' (1966), in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1978, p. 224.
[11] Geoffrey Batchen, 'The Art of Archiving', in Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winzen (eds.), *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing and Archiving in Art*, Munich & New York: Prestel, 1998, pp. 46-7, p. 49.
[12] "People assume that all information is on-line, while most of it is not and much never will be." Richard Cox, 'Access in the Digital Information Age and the Archival Mission: the United States', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1998, p. 31.

public institutions provide digital access to at least some recognition of the mechanisms of their function – repealing and superseding the access provisions implemented upon the Public Records Act (1958) in 1967.[13] Under the FoI directive, minutes of trustees' meetings, for example, can be requested verbatim, except for where information infringes the Data Protection Act (1998). The V&A, for example, publishes its minutes almost entirely, but the legal requirement allows for abridgement and précis at the level of digital publishing. This not raises questions concerning how the enforcement of institutional transparency will promote self-surveillance – a panoptic principle. So, not only does the Public Records Office contain, organise and disseminate an archive, but it archives itself, proliferating digital publishing. At one and the same stroke, then, and as indicated in the introduction, the institution gains in authority at the loss of meta-archival totality. Whatever mediative mechanisms are pragmatically employed to maintain determinacy, sense, and perspicacity, this resisters the vertigo of access policy.

Frenkel's site features an ad infinitum of "continually posing the question of identity". But Batchen's image of the digital archive appears beholden to a degraded thought of presence: without spatial or temporal restrictions on access, information is "always available in the here and now". This terrible fiction, rife in bad theorisation of the internet, is simply ignorant of the economic, social, and technological restrictions on information, not to mention its own metaphysicality. A connecting point is made in Derrida's 'Spectographies' (1996), where the "real time" of experience is "simply an extremely reduced 'différance'".[14]

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[13] See Paul Sillitoe, 'Privacy in a Public Place: managing public records access to personal information controlled by archival services', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1998, p. 6.
[14] See Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews* (1996), trans. Jennifer Bajorek, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002, p. 129.

Impression 7 – Visual Research: Untitled – Rosetta Stone.

"Frampton's Bayreuth was, in effect," says Henderson, "the computer. [....] That is where the last stages of the film were to be generated, and the film [...] to achieve its ideal realisation."[15] The shift of *Magellan* is not only in taxonomic principle, but in archival mode. Henderson's reading emphasises one pole of Frampton's oscillation: claiming that in Frampton's discussion, the mythic and psychological "is far less extensive" than the metafilmic endeavour, the mythic recedes under the "rationalization of the history of film and resynthesis of film tradition".[16] Henderson thus places digital technology within a process of increasing perspicacity and order. But it is the excessive exposure and quantity of the internet that is its mode of opacity, hiding, and retraction; and not only in a theoretical sense, but also in its quotidian use. Because of the success of search engines, the volume of information on the internet appears to be the cause of the loss of determinacy and finality. The very accessibility of information at the same time constructs something that recedes, darkens, becomes brilliantly opaque.

These are effects that, of course, are always and already discernable in information in general – the internet, technologically specific, changes this effect in terms of social use. The navel, its opacity being its mechanism of production, is applicable to the digital environment. Both are effects of the very ordinary groundlessness of meaning. The nonfinality of the internet appears to be essentially quantitative – comparable to Barthes' endless semiosis rather than something like

[15] Brian Henderson, 'Propositions for the Exploration of Frampton's *Magellan*', in *October* 32, Spring 1985, p. 150.
[16] Henderson, 'Propositions', p. 145.

différance. But the quantitative excess of the internet would but be a product of something like the sheaf-structure of the sign: a chiasmus between quality and quantity. The digital is superficially characterised as ad infinitum – behind this lies the unfinite.

A phobia of the indeterminate, which would eventually connect to the unfinite, surfaces in the institutional matrix of research by practice. It has been argued that the emphasis on written contextualisation maintains a stereotype of the opaque art-object.[17] This attitude finds its cultural expression where "[t]he image is set over against discourse. It is mute and in need of a voluble interpreter. It drifts and requires a linguistic anchor".[18] The privilege of the written also determines the professional practice of archiving: "the *Rules for Archival Description* [...] requires archivists [...] to privilege written descriptions on graphic records over the actual images".[19] Such statements split the impression across two media – the vague to the image, the precise to the text – but each will be inflected by this duality. The statements also reiterate the Platonic denigration of the image. For Plato, image and word repeat the same thing ad infinitum – they require a paternal voice to supplement feminine weakness.[20] The endless archival accumulation of such texts thus stores forms of infinite repetition – ad infinitum within ad infinitum. The conditions for a degendered archival ad infinitum is implicated in the institutional anxiety associated to practical research.

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[17] Fiona Candlin, 'Practice-based Doctorates and Questions of Academic Legitimacy', in *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2000, p. 96.
[18] Candlin, 'Practice-based Doctorates', p. 98.
[19] Lorraine O'Donnel, 'Towards Total Archives: The Form and Meaning of Photographic Records', *Archivaria* No. 38, Fall 1994, p. 105.
[20] Plato, 'Phaedrus', 275e, in Edith Hamilton & Huntingdon Cairns (eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1999, p. 521.

Fig.65: Sas Mays, *Untitled (Rosetta Stone)*, photograph, 100 x 100 cm.

Untitled – Rosetta Stone (fig.65) is a digital image containing the blurred remnant of that object of written translation par excellence culled from the British Museum's web presence. In the photograph of the computer screen which marks the next step of documentation, its grid is the only precise information available. The grid, like Frampton's video raster, represents a potentially endless tessellation, a delirium of logic blanketing the globe, and refers to the digital archive, just as the image here; but its sensuous image edges a formless delirium of grain – the unfinite.

The unstable relationship between image and text – differing in social, historical, technological context and in specific affect, but also meeting through paper – is materially signalled in the awkward transparency of these pages, through which images and words loom, recede, and conflict. The retreat of writing and of traditional archives, and the precise digital grid, emphasises the surface of the photographic "pseudo-paper", referring to the consistently haunting presence of the retreating reign of paper within the electronic milieu, and to affects of nostalgia, mourning, and melancholy – the remanence of the (web) page within the digital milieu. In its retention of meaning, paper offers protection, but it recedes as a substrate beneath each mark, and thus for Derrida: "paper [...] is at one and the same time a protection and a promise of its own withdrawal. This is why protection is itself a threat, a threat different from itself".[21]

[21] See Jacques Derrida, 'Paper or Myself, you know ... : (new speculations on a luxury of the poor)', in *Paragraph*, No. 21, 1998, p. 6, p. 5, pp. 20-1, p. 17.

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